NEW STATESMAN
SOCIETY

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The supreme sweat

Peach decor, deep pile carpets, chandeliers and the men in dinner jackets. And it's working class women who have the run of this world—3 million of them. Welcome to Bingo, and the supreme sweat

Poll tax: the fallout from the riots

Sara Maitland refuses to stuff a mushroom; Michèle Roberts summons the Muse; Marina Warner finds the invisible photographer

William Keegan on Major's budget

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Poll Tax was born in 10 Downing Street out of Mrs Thatcher's obsessive desire to abolish the rating system.

It is Mrs Thatcher who thinks it's fair to have a tax which ignores people's ability to pay. And Mrs Thatcher who thinks it's fine that a widow in a bedsit could have to pay the same Poll Tax as a millionaire in a mansion.

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Labour

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The Poll Tax PROTEST

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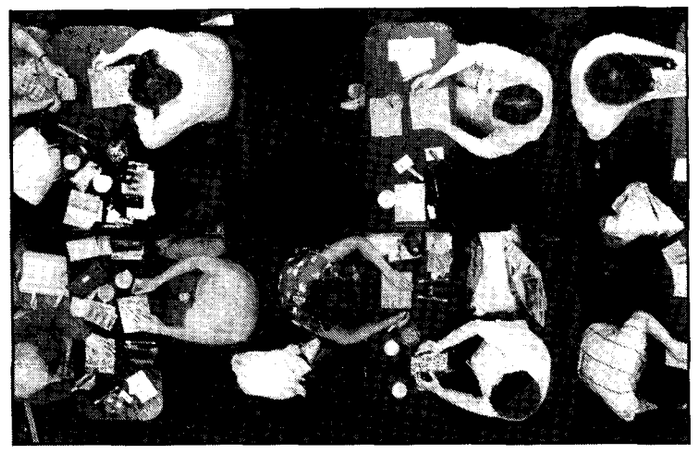

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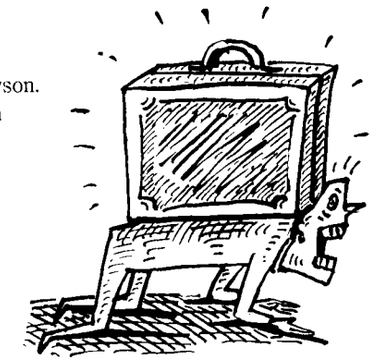

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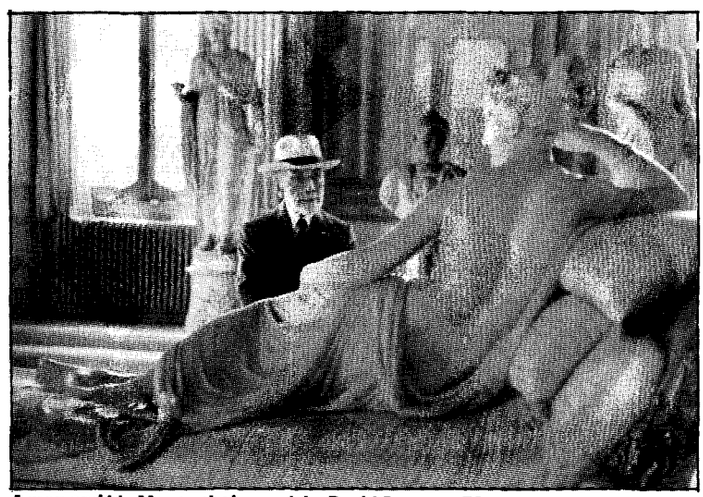

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Can't get started

No party yet takes green politics seriously. It may be civil society which forces them to

Andrzej Krauze

The bright green dawn of last year's Euro-elections was supposed to herald an qualitative shift in the British political zeitgeist. The way to counter the electoral threat of the Green Party, it was thought, was for the other parties to adopt greenery: not as a bolt-on extra, but as a central plank of their political strategy.

Nine months later, it is clear that the Conservative Party still prefers to think of green politics in terms of bottle banks and municipal dog shit. The big questions that affect the whole of humanity—how to stop the world frying under an ozoneless sky or drowning as a result of the greenhouse effect—are being treated with a lackadaisical nonchalance that, in the circumstances, borders on the criminal.

According to the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee, Britain's emissions of carbon dioxide, the principal greenhouse gas, rose by nearly *twice* the world average in 1987 (the latest available figures). France and Germany managed to cut their emissions by the same amount. The government expects to continue on this course for the next ten years before it agrees to hold them steady at a level 20 per cent greater than today. Next Thursday, at a meeting of European Community environment ministers, Environment Secretary Chris Patten will come under renewed pressure to stabilise emissions by the year 2000 at today's levels—a relatively modest ambition considering some experts think Britain must cut its emissions by 30 per cent by the year 2000 and by 70 per cent by 2020 to preserve some sort of habitable world.

It will be impossible to achieve these targets without paying far more attention to energy efficiency. Yet the government's *sole* contribution has been to offer its support to a new independent charitable trust, the National Energy Foundation. And it has *cut* the budget of its own organisation, the Energy Efficiency Office. Patten has had no backing from the Treasury or the Departments of Transport and Energy. We do not expect the future of the planet to be uppermost in John Major's mind as he delivers his budget speech next week.

David Pearce, Patten's economic advisor, is actively encouraging his minister to talk of "game strategies": "The greenhouse effect is the equivalent of a 'game' with a large number of players." He hopes that a poor third world country which doesn't have the ante to get into this game will be staked by a rich country. We can see this happening, he says. China and India already say they haven't the money to cut their greenhouse gas emissions and are looking for technology transfers and cash compensation from the west. But supposing the west won't lend enough? Supposing the third world won't pay it back? What does the game theory say then?

The other parties—including, oddly enough, the Liberal Democrats and the Greens themselves—are also dangerously unwilling to spell things out. Labour has not yet committed itself to any specific reduction in emissions. This week the Institute for Public Policy Research, the party's closet think-tank, published its advice to the Chancellor: *Green Taxes. A Budget Memorandum.* Its appearance is important, more for what it signals than its content. Its advocacy of using taxes and the market, together with the more traditionally favoured option of regulation, indicates an encouraging shift in Labour thinking.

But this is a very limited document. Although refreshingly specific about exactly what taxes should be put on what items, it barely tackles global warming. The party fears that it is electorally dangerous to try to deal with the greenhouse effect by reducing energy consumption. because this could conflict with other policy areas, such as poverty, and could disproportionately affect pensioners.

For sure, this is a difficulty, but it's not insuperable. In this issue Stephen Smith and Mark Pearson examine what effects energy taxes would have on different groups in Britain. They are currently producing a major study for Friends of the Earth on the distributional effects.

In the end, it may have to be civil society, in the form of groups like FOE, which has to push the process into a higher gear. David Pearce thinks of emission control as an economic game, with different players acting according to their own interests. In this game, it's in every country's interest to get all the others to play. But so far, it's the spectators who have invaded the pitch and the actual players are still in the dressing room. The Westminster parties seem to have decided that a light green veneer will pick up useful votes, but that anything more radical will lose them. This narrow electoralism will be the death of us.

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Beyond stalemate

On Thursday the Israeli Labour Party moved a vote of no confidence in the government of Likud and its remaining allies, having been kicked out of the coalition cabinet by prime minister Yitzhak Shamir two days earlier. When you read this, we will know who managed to win the 61 votes necessary for a Knesset majority. Yet it scarcely matters whether Israel swings into another election now, or later. The Palestinian question has so split the country that another messy stand-off seems inevitable. But new signs suggest that outside forces may win the changes that internal wrangles cannot.

American pressure to negotiate with the PLO, resisted so far by Likud, forced the coalition partners asunder this week. That muscle will become more visible, and more vigorous. Israel receives about $3 billion in congressional aid every year—far more than any other state—with private donations on top. Now US secretary of state James Baker has threatened to stem the flow of funds if the illegal settlement of Russian Jews in the occupied territories continues. Senate leader Robert Dole, meanwhile, has proposed a re-direction of American aid to benefit eastern Europe, at a possible annual cost to Israel of $150 million. And many American Jews have winced at the prime-time evidence of Israeli brutality in suppresing the *intifada*.

As one superpower turns the screws, the other throws a spanner in the works. Estimates of Soviet Jewish immigration into Israel have just risen from 100,000 to 230,000 for 1990 alone. Another 750,000 may soon flee the crisis of *perestroika* and resurgent anti-semitism. No-one knows how these newcomers will fit into the country's political pattern but they will make up a formidable block of future voters. Taken together, the weight of American money and Russian numbers could break for ever the state of paralysis interrupted by convulsions (such as this week's showdown) that the Palestinians' plight has imposed on Israeli life.

Tarzan's return

There is no evidence that Michael Heseltine's resignation from the Cabinet during the almost entirely forgotten Westland Affair was anything but an act of headstrong improvisation. Only afterwards did he convert it into acute political strategy, the latest in a long tradition of politicians seeking to make their reputations outside government.

It is still virtually inconceivable that the Conservative Party could jettison a leader who has won three elections in a row for them. But if they did, Michael Heseltine would be more likely to win an election than Mrs Thatcher.

It's a prospect that may be causing some alarm among the shadow cabinet. For it seems probable that a government led by Heseltine, purged of Parkinson and Ridley, would pursue policies much like those of the Labour Party: higher taxes, investment in the infrastructure, a coordinated policy of regional revival.

In fact, Michael Heseltine would probably be able to undertake a more radical programme than Neil Kinnock. A new Labour government would face an immediate sterling crisis—or the prospect of one—and would have to win the confidence of the City and the international money markets by behaving "responsibly" on matters of taxation and public spending. Neil Kinnock has already been loudly failing to make promises about increased government expenditure. Heseltine, by contrast, would be greeted by a relieved financial community and EC partners whose language he speaks—metaphorically if not literally.

The new generation Thatcherite reputedly prays every night that Heseltine may never become leader. Neil Kinnock must be muttering a few words under his breath as well.

Honourable defeat

The ambulance crews are returning to work after exactly six months in dispute. Is this a victory for the famous "new unionism"? Mr Roger Poole's undeniable PR skills and the unions' refusal to go on all-out strike reaped massive public support. But the bottom line was a pay increase which, for the average ambulance worker, is only 9 per cent over twelve months: a mere 2.5 per cent above the original offer. Special training is now to be rewarded. London weighting will be improved. But the unions still lack the pay formula that they insisted was their major demand. Their settlement is barely above the current rate of inflation.

Most crucially, the ambulance crews have obtained only what most other public sector workers got last summer on a fairly blatant "sod the public" platform. The London Underground strike, conducted in an old-fashioned way by old-fashioned activists, was a success: management's "Action Stations" plan for flexible rostering had to be scrapped. Local authority workers received 8.8 per cent. The railway unions and the BBC achieved between 8 and 9 per cent. Conversely, the nurse's action in 1982, every bit as popular as the ambulance workers' stance, achieved very little.

The lesson is that public opinion matters only if the government is receptive to it, and this one—mid term with a 100 plus majority—is not receptive, or rather regards its anti-inflationary policy as more important. The ambulance unions have certainly contributed to the government's terminal rating in the opinion polls, for which much thanks. But as far as the dispute itself is concerned, the most they can claim is one of those fashionable moral victories which are indistinguishable from defeat.

Baltic bad faith

The rules about when you recognise a country as a sovereign state are quite straightforward, say the experts. It must have a stable population, be able to discharge its international obligations, have its own identifiable territory, and be able to control that territory. Lithuania falls at the last hurdle because, in the end, it is still controlled by Moscow. In fact, it is doubtful whether it gets over the second hurdle either, since the Soviet Republic of Lithuania is a geographically larger entity than the state which was briefly independent from 1918 to 1940.

All of this, though, is embarrassing for the British government, which *already* recognises Lithuania as an independent state, inasmuch as there is a perfectly *bona fide* Lithuanian legation in Kensington (and an Estonian legation in Queen's Gate). During the Soviet freeze, the Foreign Office was happy to hand out such chips to the Baltic republics when there seemed no possibility that they would be cashed.

Now that Lithuania has declared independence, the British government mumbles that, actually, it didn't really mean it. William Waldegrave's position seems to differ hardly at all from Gorbachev's: Lithuania can be independent—but not quite yet, and only as a result of successful negotiation. In the end, of course, *realpolitik* could scarcely demand anything else. But the Lithuanians are entitled to feel a little sore; and we should pause awhile next time the government talks about the right of peoples to self-determination.

Chris Patten may be about to get into even murkier waters than the North Sea. He's written a foreword to the Environment Council's about-to-be-published *Who's Who in the Environment*. This lavishes praise on the hard-working organisations who campaign to save the planet. It seems he overlooked one of the groups named: the Animal Liberation Front Supporters' Group. The group, explained a pained representative from the Council, is nothing to do with the ALF: "They give support to people who are imprisoned for taking direct action on behalf of abused animals." A bit like the way Sinn Fein gives support to families of imprisoned IRA members, really.

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LETTERS

Guilty feelings

I am writing to thank Caroline Newton for her enormous courage in opening up the topic of the guilt a woman can feel when basic sexual feelings are aroused in circumstances where the woman concerned judges them to be unbidden, unwanted and "wrong" ("A song of experience", 2 March).

The point surely is that these feelings and the curiosity and desires that spring from them are often unbidden and may be unwanted but they are neither "right" nor "wrong". They are part of the normal functioning of every healthy human animal. It is as appropriate for Caroline to feel ashamed of her complicity, and the fact that her body responded as bodies generally do to sexual stimulation, as for a suffragette to feel ashamed of passing a motion after forced feeding. Ravenously hungry people, driven to eat food of a kind they find revolting, can apparently heave and salivate at the same time.

A major part of the abuse perpetrated by her uncle is precisely that he persuaded her to squander that initial curiosity and the awakening of her young body to sex in a relationship which he set up solely for physical titillation for himself.

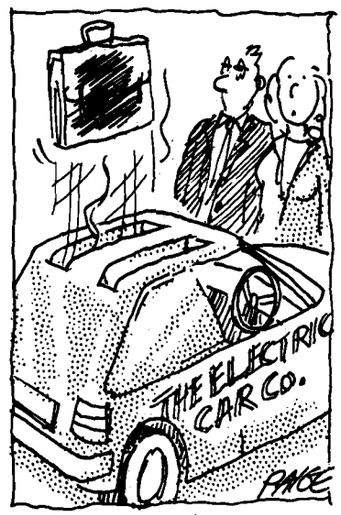
He betrayed his position as an adult guardian to whom it would have been appropriate for her to look for support and guidance in the confusion of her early sexual relationships as she discovered she had a lovely blossoming body which could excite and be excited. He denied her the affection of a friend and uncle which she so desperately needed and manipulated her into expressing her yearning for the caring accepting love, which actually was her birthright, through a sexual relationship where he had all the power and all the knowledge and where her feelings, whether the ones of revulsion or of "complicity" as Caroline calls it, were debased because they were allowed no place in the scheme of things—ie his scheme for his own gratification.

Caroline's feelings were thus roused strongly and confused at the time of the abuse. Since she's had no chance to express them or explore them since, they still are strong and confused.

As I read her article I began to see that this kind of guilt about "whether I'm making the right response" is very much part of women's sexual life even where abuse as normally understood is not present. I'm very grateful to her for opening up many helpful lines of thought for me.

Brenda Jackson
Bedfordshire

Greener cars



It is good to see some discussion of the engineering of being green in the *NSS* ("Learning to love the milk float", 2 March). Cleaning up road vehicles is obviously very urgent and the electric car might be a useful solution.

However, there is another possible approach to making cars which cause less harm. This is to use hydrogen as the energy store. Hydrogen produced from renewable resources, such as wind and sun, would not contribute to the greenhouse warming, nor produce local pollution. Unlike batteries, it would not spread dangerous chemicals around. Some work is going on with hydrogen vehicles and several buses and cars are in use in Sweden and West Germany. As with most useful research, Britain is being left behind by government indifference.

The main advantage of hydrogen is that, at least at first, it can be used in ordinary internal combustion engines. It can be transmitted down gas pipelines and vehicles can be refuelled quicker than any existing battery vehicle. The main disadvantage is that the storage medium, titanium-vanadium hydride tanks, is still very expensive. This method of storage is safer than that for oil products.

By the way, why did the C5 fail? In my case I looked at the range and found that none of my normal journeys could have been completed on a single charge of the battery. Its range was simply too small to be useful. Whether it was safe or not is a matter of opinion which has never been tested.

E G Matthews
Wimborne Energy Consultancy
Brookside Road
Dorset

A hollow victory

The Nicaraguan elections were not simply a victory for the US policy of violence and Alexander Cockburn's fears for the future are not universally shared, least of all by the outgoing Sandinistas ("Victory for violence", 9 March).

If the US policy of violence had "won", they would have won in 1985 or 1986 when the Contra war was at its height. Before the elections, the popular consensus in Nicaragua was that the US would be quite happy to accept a Sandinista victory at the polls, as every observer believed would be the case. Popular support for the Sandinistas, as expressed through an internationally observed election, would have allowed the US to remove itself from an unpopular conflict without losing too much face.

UNO's unexpected victory has actually thrown the US strategy into confusion. Now UNO expect the US to provide enough funds to rebuild Nicaragua's economic infrastructure which has been devastated by the war. Around $4 billion is required.

Early negotiations have seen US officials offering to buy Nicaraguan coffee and cotton, products for which the Nicaraguans have already found alternative markets. They need money, not markets, and lots of it.

UNO themselves are unlikely to be able to embark on a policy of counter-revolution. Unlike other examples of US intervention, such as Grenada in 1983, the institutions which protect the revolution and its constitution have not been destroyed and remain loyal to their revolutionary project. The army and the Ministry of the Interior are intact and current negotiations are expected to leave them that way. Other elements of the Sandinista state are being rapidly converted into non-governmental organisations to protect them against privatisation and government spending cuts once UNO takes over in April. Titles to state-owned buildings occupied by trade unions and other Sandinista organisations are being transferred. Such moves and the defences provided by the constitution mean that the main features of the revolution will be difficult for UNO to remove.

Nor are UNO likely to be able to govern by a state of emergency. They will not be able to rely on the army or police to enforce it, the removal of constitutional guarantees will be fiercely resisted by all popular organisations, and the threat of direct US intervention in such a scenario is extremely remote. This would inevitably provoke a new and relentless civil war, with high casualties on all sides. This would be the last thing UNO wants and the opposite of what UNO voters expected or hoped for.

The future for the Sandinistas is therefore not as bleak as many have assumed. UNO will not overcome its own weaknesses. Each party in UNO will be trying to retain and develop its own individual profile. The Sandinistas will thus remain the main political force in Nicaragua, out of office but not defeated.

While the future does remain uncertain, with numerous worst-case scenarios being drafted by all concerned, we should not let the electoral defeat blind our judgment. After ten years of sponsoring the war and terrorism of the Contras, the US now finds that the Sandinistas have survived. Even worse, they remain a coherent and united organisation which has forced the US and its UNO allies to accept their constitution, their state structure and its institutions. The Bush administration now faces enormous pressure to both finance and respect this state. This is hardly the "victory" the US either sought or expected.

Robert Beasley
National Campaigns Officer
War on Want
London SE1

Shitty and britty

Pretending that two words rhyme when they do not is the last resort of the desperate headline-writer, as seen in YOU GO POTTO FOR OUR LOTTO and HAVE ANOTHER BURGIE, FERGIE. So when Paul Morley talks about "most things shitty and Britty" ("Attack of the phonies", 2 March) we know we are in the presence of a truly dire writer.

His sentences are like mystery

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tours, embarked upon with no idea of where they may end up, and it is no wonder he sometimes gets lost on the way. I defy anyone to make sense of this in his attack on Ben Elton:

"He fiddles with his metal Morecambe specs, meaning business but always a wink away from pulling a crazy face, and gets stuck into pollution, contraception, and crumbs as particularly turned on right on as "Little and Large" are turned on right off—in the end, both ways, on or off, end in a laugh for someone."

There is nothing witty or wise about the alliterative refrain "Comedy is conviction ... comedy is complaint ... confession ... cosmic." If it's not true and it's not funny, why say it?

The worst thing about the article is its breathtaking condescension. "Elton is not a great comedian..." Come off it, Morley—how would you know? The truth is that Ben Elton's frenetic performance is founded on a script that has clarity, logic and vivid imagery. In other words, it is well written. And that, of course, is Mr Morley's blind spot.

Ken Follett
London SW10

Labour's future?

Stuart Weir ("Splendid isolation" 2 March) is correct: Labour cannot win the next election by relying on Thatcherism to lose it; Neil Kinnock cannot enter No 10 by keeping his head down and remaining quiet.

What kind of tide is Labour trying to be elected upon?

The current framework on offer from a future Labour Government seems to make a virtue of what it is not: no poll tax, no student loans, lower interest rates and mortgage payments and a policy on inflation but not wages, and er, that's it.

Labour either will not win with this, not be the master of its own fate or will enter office and be discredited.

An alternative prospective framework for a Labour Government would be about tackling our century-old economic decline. Labour should not solely base this on a "productivist" emphasis, ie, solving manufacturing decline, training, research and development and other intractable long-term problems. These are unlikely to come right in one term. Labour must remember it has never been re-elected for a second full-term.

The "productivist" part needs a populist cutting edge, as the Tories have shamelessly promoted self-interest in the 50s and 80s.

Labour could also attack political decline by placing itself in the mainstream of the only reformist opinion making intellectual headway: the Scottish Consitutional Convention and Charter 88 with notions of citizenship and enabling rights. It is not only the dead-weight of Roy Hattersley, but Labour's constitutional inertia, that bars the way. Yet, no other single area offers Labour such a chance to be democratic, modern and win trust.

Just because Thatcherism has now clearly passed its sell-by date does not mean the future is Labour's.

Gerry Hassan
Dundee

THIS ENGLAND

£5 book tokens for entries printed. (Postcards please)

● When I was a young diplomat, before the war, I was taught that if two or more clerics were present at table the most junior should be invited to say grace; the idea being that it was a humble and routine task that the more exalted should be spared.

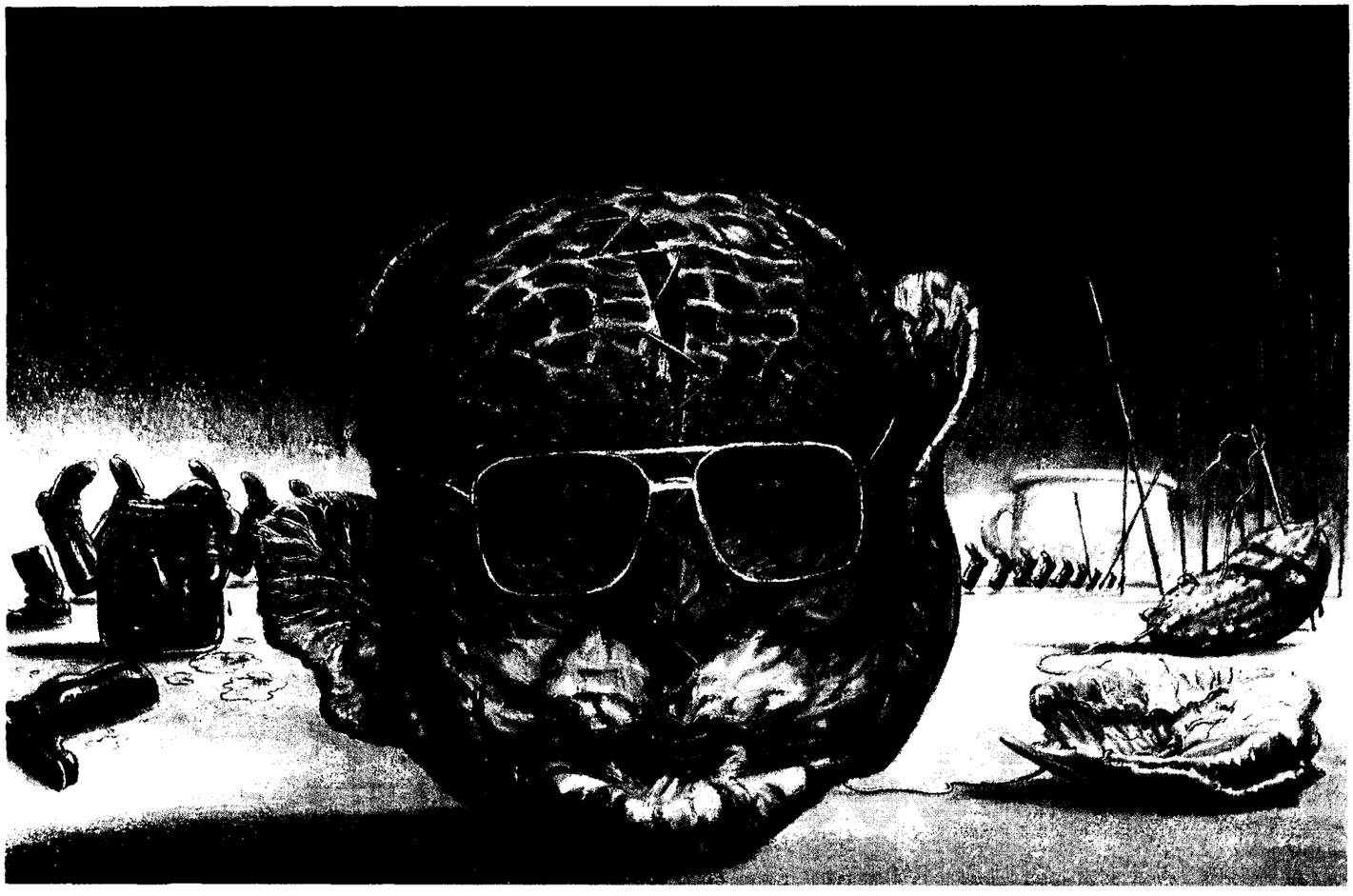
Last week, I attended a luncheon in London at which grace was said by the Archbishop of Canterbury despite the fact that the Archbishop of York and several Bishops (and, I daresay, some even lesser luminaries) were there, too, and could have been asked to do it.

I wonder whether this change has any significance.—Letter in the *Independent* (Ron Chatterjee)

● An anaesthetist used mime to explain to four Turkish donors how their organs would be removed and given to someone else, the General Medical Council's professional conduct committee was told yesterday. —*Guardian* (Janet Mearns)

● I bought a pair of leather shoes and found when I got home that one was badly scuffed at the heel.

When I returned them, the assistant said that the scuff had been caused by the cow from which they were made scratching herself on a gate.—Letter in the *People's Journal* (Mary Sempson)



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DIARY

A fascinating exhibition of art fakes has just opened at the British Museum, but the most intriguing fake on display in a London gallery at the moment is to be found elsewhere.

Sean French

One of the crucial pictures in the selection of photographs by the Magnum Agency at the Hayward Gallery on the South Bank, indisputably the most famous war photograph in history, is Robert Capa's *Death of a Loyalist Soldier* taken in Spain in August 1936. According to legend, Capa was hiding in a trench as some Republican soldiers made a desperate assault on a Nationalist position. Capa simply lifted his camera above the parapet and pressed the shutter without looking. His undeveloped film was sent back to Paris and only two months later did he discover that he had been made famous by his chance photograph of a soldier falling backwards apparently at the moment a bullet has struck him.

Unlike other forms of art, photojournalism depends on trust. Phillip Knightley wrote in his book on war reporting, *The First Casualty*, that the photograph would mean something entirely different—while looking exactly the same—if we were told that it showed a soldier slipping on a banana skin.

From the very beginning, Capa was accused of having faked the photograph and such evidence as exists makes the charge seem plausible. The dubiousness of its most famous image has always been an embarrassment for Magnum. Capa died shortly after the war but when his brother came to be interviewed for the recent BBC celebration of the agency, he vetoed in advance any discussion of the photograph. For the current exhibition there is no mention of fraud but no caption talking of "the death of a Loyalist" either.

But it's good that the picture is there. Magnum is an outstanding picture agency but it has always taken itself a little seriously. It is salutary to be reminded that fakery can be perpetrated as well by a high-minded, crusader as by a hack.

All those who will soon be weeping at the moving view of death in Steven Spielberg's new movie, *Always* (soon to be given a Royal Command Performance in London), pay attention.

Last week I cited jocular advice to journalists from Stephen Potter's book, *Lifemanship*. In the same book Potter provides advice on the art of writing book dedications. He mentions a (quite fictitious) author who invented a form of dedication designed to forestall all criticism of his book: "TO PHYLLIS," it went, "In the hope that one day God's glorious gift of sight may be restored to her" and reviewers consequently felt that it would be in bad taste to be rude about the book. Potter adds: "Only I knew that Phyllis was, in fact, [the author's] great-grandmother, extremely short-sighted, it is true. And not surprising, at the age of 96."

But does anyone really care about dedications? They do if money is involved. Like many Hollywood films, *Always* was written by at least five writers and the allocation of credit was contentious. Most of the filmed screenplay was written by Tom Stoppard (who also wrote the script of Spielberg's *Empire of the Sun*), but he wanted to remain anonymous.

So Spielberg planned to credit two early writers on the script, Jerry Belson and Diane Thomas (who scripted *Romancing the Stone* and was killed in a car crash back in 1985). But Belson wanted a sole credit. He appealed to the Writers Guild of America and won.

So Spielberg decided to append a dedication to the film: "In memory of Diane Thomas: We will love you always." According to the American film magazine, *Premiere*, Belson then insisted, with the backing of the Writers Guild, that the dedication could only be used if he was paid $150,000 and if every advertisement promoting Spielberg for a best director Oscar was matched by an ad of the same size promoting Belson. The dedication was dropped.

The story of *Always* is that the dead may remain on earth and watch over us. Jerry Belson must hope that isn't true.

It's hard to keep up from week to week with which particular environmental issue we're supposed to be feeling strongly about. Much recent publicity has been given to the anti-fur campaigns, with pictures of women handing over their mink coats for destruction. Even Garry Trudeau, my favourite cartoonist, devoted a week of the Doonesbury strip to castigating those who continue to wear fur.

I can usually be relied on to be susceptible to any fad that's going but I still find it difficult to muster the requisite amount of indignation. I vividly remember the response of a radical feminist acquaintance to the poster which showed a model wearing a fur coat with a caption that went something like: "It takes twenty dumb animals to make this coat but only one dumb animal to wear it." She was torn between approval for the advertisment's message and rage at its misogyny.

It's obvious that endangered species oughtn't to be killed for their pelts, just as they shouldn't be hunted for their meat or horns, but this doesn't apply to the furs that are raised on farms. There is no logical distinction between that category and the use of leather in clothes and shoes, but I've never yet had anyone spit at me in the street for wearing my leather jacket.

This seems to me strikingly similar to the absurdity of those who protest about fox hunting, a pursuit that seems largely dedicated to reducing the human rather than the vulpine population, and the most harmless of practices when compared with the scale of factory farming, which systematically inflicts lifelong torture on animals in the process of turning them into disgusting if not dangerous food for us.

But it is easier to shout at fur-clad women and fox hunters, however insignificant the results, than to argue boringly for necessary policy changes by major financial interests. And people have complicated feelings about women in fur coats anyway. It's not just that they are conspicuously wealthy. I suspect that they are images of a sensual, narcissistic pleasure that is disapproved of especially in women. When people hit out that the decadence of a society—Juvenal in Rome, Swift in London—the expressions of female sexuality are always one of the principal targets.

And of course there's simple physical cowardice. Even I wouldn't be afraid of shouting at a sun-tanned jetsetter in Bond Street. If the anti-fur protesters are going to win me over they are going to have to spit at a few bootboys, throw red paint over some hell's angels. That would be a truly interesting encounter between humans and dumb animals.

ROGER WODDIS

A smell of burning

There was a smell of burning
And smoke curled up through the floor,
And some of the more discerning
Got up and made for the door.
The fumes they were forced to swallow
Caused them to choke as they fled;
In vain they begged her to follow.
"I'll go when I'm ready," she said.

The horrified crowd stood gaping.
"Jump!" came an agonised cry.
"It's your only hope of escaping."
"Poppycock!" came the reply.
A fireman with fair locks flowing
As long as a lover's kiss
Appealed, with the flames still growing,
"Let me take you away from all this."

But not even the darts of Cupid
Could pierce the thick skin she had;
She insisted it would be stupid
To go while the going was bad.
There was many a whitened knuckle
And many a fear was felt,
As the girders began to buckle
And the wrought-iron gates to melt.

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Peter Marlow/Magnum

Sweating on numbers

Three million women play bingo every week. Maria Manning visits the Top Rank in Liverpool to ask what they get out of it

Wednesday evening: Frances, aged 57, has just arrived home from a four-hour stint cleaning offices. She takes her meal from the oven and, out of habit, eats it standing up. She then swallows a quick cup of tea, washes her face, and heads off to meet her daughter Liz, 24, at the bottom of the road. Linking arms against the slicing wind and rain, they make their way through a maze of empty streets to the bright lights and plush peach decor of the Top Rank Bingo and Social Club in Liverpool.

They are swallowed up by the electronic babble of ubiquitous fruit machines and the low buzz of female conversation. Wednesday night is £2-all-in night (covering admission charge and tickets), so there's a good crowd in. Women of all ages enjoy the run of the place. There is constant traffic on the broad stairways, through the "City Tavern" bar with ersatz Victorian panelling and "The Pantry" where the women grab plastic cups of tea and snacks on polystyrene dishes from staff in straw boaters. Despite the upbeat glamour of the place, they are casually dressed: a few wear make-up and jewellery, but most are in track suits or working clothes. One woman has kicked off high heels in order to feed a slot machine in comfort.

It's 7.50. Play is about to begin. The caller, known to all as John, takes his place at a glittery green pulpit suspended half-way to the ceiling. The "Slots of Fun" arcade empties as players scoot to their seats. John, a mixture of Master of Ceremonies and stand-up comic, is in full evening dress, including bow tie. He quickly dispenses with the preliminaries: "Good evening ladies and gentlemen, and you Elsie ..." We sit, pens poised and the real business of the evening begins: The Game. "Four and eight, forty-eight... on its own, number nine..."

All heads are bowed during this brisk litany. The only noise is the soft scribble of hundreds of felt-tip pens—it's so quiet I can hear the lungs of the woman next to me whine as she sucks on a cigarette. Coughing is strictly prohibited, and there is blatant collective censure ("dirty looks" or tutting) of those who fail to control their bronchial tubes—missing a number can spoil your chance of winning money, and money is taken very seriously here.

The first game is the Early Bird Special. The first player to get five numbers marked in a horizontal line wins £10. Only a dozen or so numbers are called before there's a winner. "E.R!" she shouts, not some incongruous salute to the monarch, just Liverpudlian verbal shorthand for "Here you are". Nobody would

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dream of shouting "Bingo", although you do ocasionally hear the conventional "House!" One of the uniformed checkers, dotted throughout the hall, reads out the serial and security numbers of the book, which the caller uses to verify the claim on a computer. Frances uses the few seconds this takes to mutter darkly about not having had a proper chance to get started. Then silence descends and we're off again, this time playing for two lines. The games succeed each other rapidly: next it's two full houses, for a prize of £40 each.

The rhythm of play is now set. At a crisp pace we play the Easy Six, and the first four games of the main session, each for a line for £20 and a full house for £100, then on to the National Game. This is for *real* money, a £50,000 prize, and the players have to buy special 25p tickets. The game is played every night between all the major commercial clubs. John calls out numbers randomly selected by a central computer. The house prize of £247 is won within a minute on the 46th number. After the interval, John announces that the regional prize was won in Chester, and the national prize in Coventry (in 40 numbers). "The bloody swines" is Frances's non-specific expression of disgust.

Stacato conversations take place between games while winning claims are checked, but there's no chance to talk until the interval. "Did you get any sweats?" Frances asks her daughter. "Not even a sniff of one," she replies. This is authentic Bingo Lingo, which any novice soon becomes fluent in. A "sweat" is a graphic description of the physical reaction to mounting tension as a player comes close to winning. Sweats come in triple, double or single underlined varieties, according to how many numbers you are waiting on. The supreme sweat, waiting on one number, is excruciating, especially when big money is involved: "Your innards turn over, your heart pounds, and your legs go to jelly." This is straight from the horse's mouth—from Betty who sits at the next table. A 55-year-old school dinner lady at a local primary school, she narrowly missed winning £9,000 (more than two years' wages) because 33 wasn't called. Actually, this was several years ago, but the number is burnt forever into her memory.

Many of the players have "pet" numbers, sometimes linked to dates of family birthdays, and uncooperative numbers, numbers which habitually refuse to come out when they're needed. Remarks like "that awkward bastard 22 again" can be heard throughout the evening. They don't really believe that numbers have human traits or motives, it's just an attempt to see patterns in and impose predictability onto something utterly arbitrary. It is part of the ritual of the game to record your sweats on the back of your book of tickets, then you can fret over them, grumble, commiserate with your neighbour over hers.

During the interval Liz disappears to play Prize Bingo, a quickie version like that played in fairgrounds. Her mother looks on disapprovingly: "The little bugger. She'll moan at me if she spends too much, but she can't peel herself off that Prize Bingo." Frances's own weakness is for the slot machines, although she is careful to limit the amount she spends, and never goes over her £2 ceiling. While we talk, men in dinner jackets patrol all areas carrying boxes of 10p and 20p pieces, giving change to anyone wanting to play the machines.

Bingo is a game of pure chance. It requires no skill. You can't study form, calculate probabilities or work from memory. That's why bingo players are ridiculed as moronic (the *Times* once described bingo as a "cretinous pastime"). But it's the whole point of the game's appeal. Liz explains the attraction of the mixture of chance and growing suspense: "It's not up to me what numbers come up. I have no control over them. There's no skill in it, which means I don't have to work hard—that's why it's dead relaxing. I work in a dry cleaners, on my feet all day, then I go home and do the teas, so when I come out I like to relax."

Frances endorses this: "I come here for a break, to get out the house. At home I'm always doing something or supposed to be doing something. There's always a dozen jobs waiting, accusing me. Here, your worries drop off you. Of course, you go home to them at the end, but still..." Frances has a large family. Her husband is a bus driver, and she has always had to work to contribute to the household income. She earns £44 for her 18-hour week cleaning offices: "My kids are reared now. I've still got two at home, but they're all grown up. I love my little job for the independence it gives me. I can spend some of my money on cigs and bingo and it's nobody's business but mine."

In a supposedly post-class society, bingo remains emphatically, undeniably, exclusively, a working-class pursuit. An analysis done in 1981 found that 85 per cent of players came from social classes C2, D and E. It is also a game played predominantly by women, typically middle-aged or older women.

It's so quiet in the hall I hear the lungs of the woman next to me whine as she sucks on a cigarette

As such, bingo has been the target of much snobbery and sexism. When gambling was legalised in 1960, the press was full of moralistic scare stories of feckless females squandering their "housekeeping" (men spend money, women "housekeeping") at the new "dens of iniquity". The hysteria has subsided, but has never disappeared. In 1976, the Police Superintendents' Association reported that, "Bingo clubs have been the cause of some family neglect and in particular children are too often left to their own devices when the father is at the public house and the mother at the bingo club." In 1980 the *Glasgow Evening Times* warned that "bingo palaces" were "taking over": "More and more women are being drawn into the world of gambling—a world of ruin and deceit where the prayed-for 'big win' is worshipped with all the anticipation of the second coming, and where nothing is sacred if it can be sold for betting money."

Among the women I spoke to, there was no evidence of compulsive gambling or family neglect. Far from it. They are far too shrewd and hard-headed to overspend. Playing bingo is their right, a reward for hard work, but spending is carefully controlled to fit within tight family budgets. Besides, it is the social side which is important: the companionship, the chance to relax. Women often play in groups with family members, workmates or neighbours, but at many tables women sit alone, reading, doing crosswords or knitting during the intervals. Betty explained that it was the one place you could go to at night on your own without feeling self-conscious or embarrassed. Nobody bothered you, and there was always someone you knew to talk to if you felt like it.

Bingo has other social uses. In inner city areas old people take advantage of concessions and use the large halls as cheap places to eat (curry beef and rice is on special offer for 55p) and keep warm. But they are also unmistakably commercial enterprises run for profit; there is a constant hard sell of all products and services. With the existing market already saturated, and a legislative veto on individual clubs advertising, the big companies compete against each other for players. Halls are constantly revamped, "images" constantly reworked, new concepts —pop music, uniforms designed by Next—employed to attract more young people to the game.

In Liverpool's Top Rank, a massive electronic noticeboard makes liberal use of rotating £ signs and flashing exclamation marks in its silent effort to cajole the women to spend, spend, spend: "Why not try out new Gino Ginelli's ice cream 40p?"... "Have fun, play the latest machines in the cosy atmosphere of our arcade"... Don't rush away—Stay and Play"... Frances and Liz seem immune to all this. They have their own routines and spending patterns, and stick to them. Frances refuses to drink tea here, "not at 26p a cup!"

Whatever the tension between its social and commercial roles, bingo is certainly popular. No matter that it has never merited the approval of the class that passes judgment on our leisure pursuits. The HMSO's *Social Trends* recognises visiting historic buildings, amateur dramatics and needlework as leisure activities, but not bingo. As we put on our coats to leave, John says goodnight and take care, while the noticeboard urges, "Do you have a friend who is not yet a member? Pick up an application form now." A large old woman in bedroom slippers, her thick legs bound in dirty bandages, heaves herself out of her seat and shouts, "See you tomorrow" at nobody in particular.

Outside, we struggle diagonally against a bitter wind. The Golden Nugget arcade next to the bingo hall is in darkness, but Wongs fish bar is busy and the queue at Bottoms Up, an off-licence fortified like a West Belfast police station, straggles down the street. Passing through streets of small terraced housing, currently notorious for the high number of mortgage repossessions, we head home to get the kettle on. ●

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Major alterations

John Major's budget must 'hurt' if it is to work—and rebuild the economy following Lawson's rampage. William Keegan asks how far the Chancellor can go?

When Nigel Lawson resigned so dramatically last October, Mrs Thatcher had no hesitation in nominating his successor. She had picked John Major out as the person she wanted to succeed *her*; the Foreign Office and Treasury were to be Major's staging posts.

What the Prime Minister had not expected was that Lawson would disappear so soon. Major's sojourn at the Foreign Office had been brief and gauche, and the assumption was that he would acquire a little more gravitas in the following year, before being put smoothly into the Treasury at some suitable date. As recently as six months ago John Major had no idea that he would be in the hot seat for this coming budget.

Nobody had calculated sufficiently that, after the derisory treatment meted out to Sir Geoffrey Howe in the July 1989 reshuffle, Lawson's pride would ensure that the Chancellor would depart at a moment to suit himself—not the Prime Minister or Major. For, with Howe's backing, Lawson knew that it was only a matter of time before his own number came up.

It falls, therefore, to Major to introduce not a pre-election budget of popular sweeteners, but a budget designed to avoid rocking the boat further at a time when the previous captain has been well and truly found out—even in his own terms. (During one of his cockier phases, Lawson boasted that inflation would be "the judge and jury" of his Chancellorship.)

Major will introduce next Tuesday's budget against a background of widespread forecasts that inflation is heading for 9 per cent —embarrassingly close to the 10 per cent inherited from those wicked Labour inflaters, all those years ago in 1979. Lawson had also argued that the balance of payments deficit was no great matter for concern and, if anything, a problem for the private sector to sort out.

This is not a view shared by that part of the private sector which Lawson once raised to the status of possessing the supreme wisdom —namely, the financial markets. The markets were very worried by last year's current balance of payments deficit of over £20 billion. And the peaceful feeling that the trend of the deficit was nevertheless improving has been rudely shattered by the publication of the truly appalling January trade figures.

These worries on the economic front have now been compounded by what is known in the City as "political uncertainty". The opinion polls have recently been pointing to the serious possibility of a Labour government, and the fiasco surrounding the implementation—if that is the word—of the poll tax has raised serious doubts about Mrs Thatcher's ability to stay the distance.

Once parliament and the markets had got over the idea that Lawson was indispensable—not to say, unassailable—Major enjoyed a honeymoon period during which his bid to be seen as "a safe pair of hands" worked remarkably well. He took economic lessons from the Treasury machine. Performing well, if at times woodenly, in the Commons, on television and before the Treasury select committee, she had no hesitation in blaming (without naming) his predecessor for such problems as the economy had. He glibly asserted that "if it isn't hurting, it isn't working"; exuded the general impression that he believed in a more pragmatic approach; then lay back and tried not to think too much about the average mortgage-holder.

After some troubles in the exchange markets in late 1989, the pound recovered a few weeks ago to what was known in the Treasury as The Lawson Level. Despite some worries about the continuing high level of wage settlements, the general assumption at the key budget strategy meeting in January was that high interest rates would eventually do the trick of getting the economy into better balance. The budget would be a case of "steady as she goes", with tax allowances and excise duties adjusted for inflation, a few "green" gestures, and the odd bash at such sitting (in traffic jams) targets as company cars.

But the panic in the markets and the threat of a 9 per cent inflation figure raise the question whether excise duties should be increased at all—the miscalculations about the level of the poll tax will in themselves contribute an extra ¾ to 1 percentage point to the Retail Price Index this spring. If—to minimise the impact on the RPI—the Chancellor allows excise duties to get off lightly, then the "hurting" principle, reinforced by the recent weakness of sterling, might point to that other Treasury option: not fully indexing personal tax allowances in line with inflation.

The problem with this is that it is regressive; it "hurts" the lower paid disproportionately, at a time when there is already much political discontent about the regressive poll tax. Such a move has not been tried since 1981, when it caused a furore and almost led to a ganging up by wet cabinet ministers against Mrs Thatcher.

On that occasion the government was obsessed with lowering the Public Sector Borrow-

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Peter Schrank

ing Requirement. It now has a comfortable budget surplus (although below its peak). If I were advising an ambitious John Major, I should suggest it was not worth the political risk to aim at up to £1.6 billion extra revenue by not indexing personal allowances at a time like this.

I doubt whether the world's financial markets are going to care that much about the odd £1.5 billion, especially since the government has been extremely clever in nurturing expectations: despite the appalling balance of payments and inflation figures, the fact of the matter is that a budget which does not actually reduce taxes is likely to be considered tough.

Another point Major will have considered is that it is not in his interest, if he takes the gloomy view, to leave a future Labour government with a large budget surplus. Not increasing it now will still leave him with potential pre-electoral largesse next year, the point being that it will be the wider macro-economic picture which will determine whether he is free to use the surplus.

Higher German interest rates may be the last straw for Major's optimistic scenario

For it is next year's budget that is going to be the really interesting one; and the big question is whether the policy mistakes of the past decade, and events in the wider world, are going to conspire to spoil what one must assume to be the Chancellor's ideal scenario.

The ideal scenario is that the current level of interest rates—reinforced by the fact that many mortgage-holders, including those with the big Halifax Building Society, are only just starting to pay the higher rates previously announced—will be sufficient to dampen demand in the economy, switch resources further into exports (net of imports), and bring the Chancellor to the beginning of a virtuous circle next year.

The virtuous circle would begin with cuts in interest rates next winter, at a time when the financial markets were duly impressed by dramatic reductions in the balance of payments deficit, and by a reversal of the trend in the RPI. The payments deficit ought to be helped by the progressive effects of the squeeze on imports; and the retail prices index by the end of the upward spiral of mortgage increases. When interest rates start coming down, hey presto, the RPI begins to look a lot better...

But there are some serious question marks hanging over this rosy scenario. The government discovered on the occasion of Lawson's last interest rate increase to 15 per cent how vulnerable it was to decisions taken in Frankfurt. The prospect of German monetary union, and the rebuilding of vast sectors of the East German economy, is tending to raise interest rates in West Germany again. It could well turn out that British interest rates are either driven even higher, or have to stay where they are much longer, simply in order to prevent the pound collapsing in response to higher interest rates elsewhere.

The other danger for Major is that the "adjustment" of the economy may take longer than he hopes, so that by this time next year the position will not look secure enough for him to take off the pre-electoral brakes.

In all this the new Chancellor has not been helped by his predecessor. The overheating of the economy during the Lawson boom reflected not only the pressures of consumer demand, but the failure of British manufacturers to meet that demand as a result of the de-industrialisation which occurred during the Thatcher government's monetarist phase.

But what Lawson did in his 1988 budget was to throw all thought of economic and electoral cycles to the wind, and stoke up demand at a time when the economy was already overheated. This left it disturbingly late for his successor to handle the necessary slowdown *and* to contrive a sufficient recovery, all within the space of the electoral cycle. The trend of German interest rates may be the last straw for Major's optimistic scenario.

The world's financial markets have at last begun to have doubts about the British economic "miracle", at the same time as the Prime Minister associated with it is herself suddenly perceived to be at risk. Major is steering between the Scylla of higher interest rates and the Charybdis of a collapse in the pound. His main task next Tuesday is to try and lull the markets to sleep. ●

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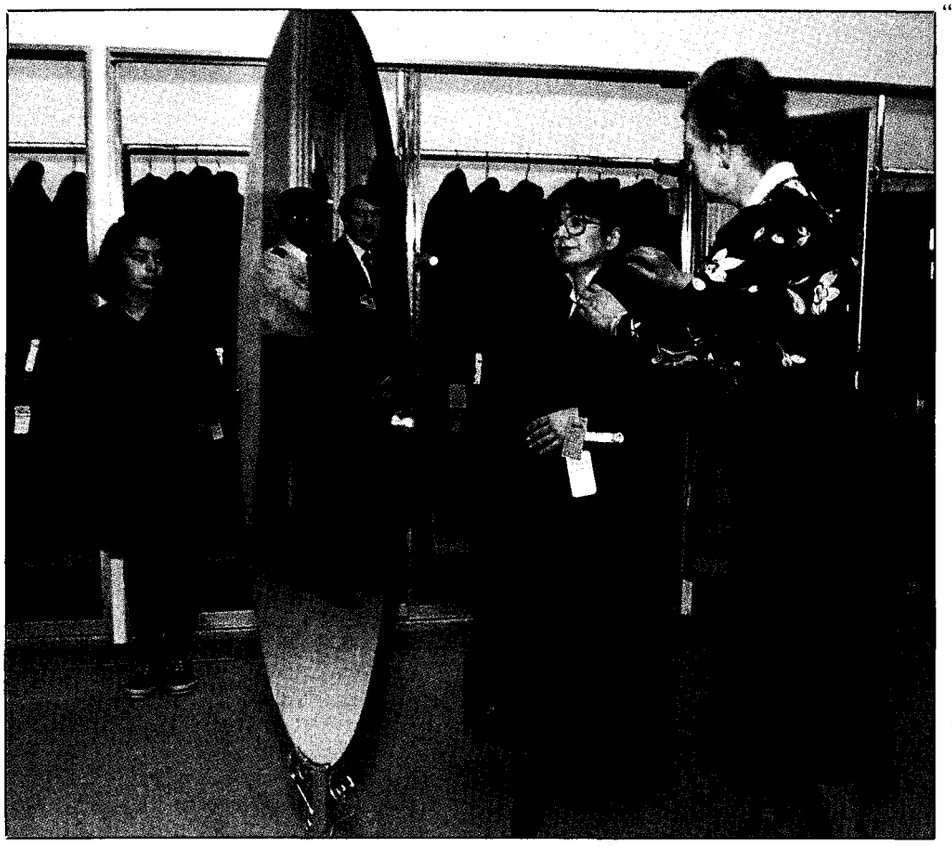

Jeremy Nicholl/Impact Photos

Foreign affairs

The Harrods saga is a twisted tale of hypocrisy, xenophobia, lying back and thinking of England, says Francis Wheen

Richard Oliver/Select

Top: "Women have a weakness for Harrods," above: a bit of British tradition

"Really you know, I love Britain," Mohamed Fayed told the *Daily Mail* five years ago, just after he had bagged Harrods. "I love your traditions and your history. And I like the way you do business. Ethics and morals count in Britain like nowhere else in the world."

He sounded too good to be true. And he was: as Sir Henry Brooke QC and Hugh Aldous confirmed in their 750-page report*, published last week, the Fayeds' own methods of doing business included telling countless lies—about the sources of their wealth, about the history of their family, even about their dates of birth. One of the brothers, Ali, was particularly impressive in this latter department, lopping no fewer than ten years off his age.

Of all the comments provoked by the report, perhaps none was more revealing than the verdict of Sir Edward du Cann, the chairman of Lonrho. "I think," he declared in his plummiest tones, "the Fayeds should be forced to leave the country." Lonrho has seldom missed an opportunity to draw attention to the Fayeds' alien origins. In March 1985, a Lonrho director complained that the brothers had "come in from behind the bullrushes"; since then the Lonrho-owned *Observer* has consistently referred to the Fayeds as the "Phoney Pharaohs". No one at du Cann's press conference was ill-mannered enough to point out that his own boss, Tiny Rowland, is at least as "foreign" as the Fayeds.

As du Cann's remark suggests, this is not merely a dispute about takeover procedures; it is also a story about England and Englishness, snobbery and hypocrisy, patriotism and xenophobia. For the prize that Fayed and Rowland are contesting so fiercely is not any old shop: it is Harrods, one of those supposedly treasured English institutions whose resonance seems more apparent to foreigners than to the natives. When a sultan or a sheikh or a Texan or whoever, buys an edifice, he invariably says how honoured he is to own a slice of little old England.

Witness the comments of the Canadian businessman, Ed Mirvish, when he bought the Old Vic theatre, or the awestruck tone of the Sultan of Brunei when he bought the Dorchester Hotel. And listen to Mohamed Fayed again, waxing rhapsodic in the *Daily Mail* interview: "Ever since I first came to this country as a young man and shopped in Harrods, I felt that it is the one store in the world I would like to own. Nothing else is comparable."

Fayed isn't the only impressionable foreigner to get absurdly moist-eyed at the idea of this overrated department store. In May 1983, one million shares in House of Fraser, Harrods' parent company, were bought by an Italian shipping heiress called Adriana Funaro, who happens to be married to Salah Fayed, one of Mohamed's brothers. The following year a Department of Trade inspector, suspicious that there was more to her shareholding than met the eye, asked why she had bought the shares. "Women have a weakness for Harrods," was her irresistible reply.

Nor should we overlook Dr Ashraf Marwan, yet another Egyptian businessman. He isn't related to the Fayeds, but he is a pretty well-connected fellow in his own right: in the sixties he married President Nasser's daughter and in

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the seventies he was President Sadat's personal adviser. In 1984 he, too, was interviewed by a Department of Trade inspector, who wanted to know why he had suddenly bought two million shares in House of Fraser the previous year. Marwan's reply was almost as winning as Adriana Funaro's: "As far as I am concerned, I consider there is one Buckingham Palace in England and there is one Harrods in England... If you buy a company of which Harrods is one of the main assets, you cannot lose."

The same thought seems to have occurred to a surprising number of people at the time. A couple of months after Marwan and Funaro started buying into Harrods, a holding of two million shares was built up by yet another foreign-based entrepreneur, Jack Hayward. Not that Hayward was actually a *foreigner*, of course. Far from it: although he lived in the Bahamas, and had done so for more than 30 years, he was a British patriot on the grand scale—hence his nickname "Union Jack". He introduced red double-decker buses to Grand Bahama, and he insisted that portraits of Queen Elizabeth should hang in all Freeport offices.

In 1969, he spent £150,000 "saving" the island of Lundy "for the nation"; in the early seventies, he helped to fund another endangered British institution, the Liberal Party.

Nevertheless, Hayward had not invested in British companies for ten years. Why the change of heart? Hayward's legal adviser, Edward St George, explained to the inspector that Hayward had been "champing at the bit" to get involved in Britain again: "After the Falklands War, he fell in love with Mrs Thatcher." It may seem strange to consummate a love affair with the British Prime Minister by investing in a department store, but no odder than Ashraf Marwan investing because Harrods is like Buckingham Palace. It's old England working its magic again.

The Fayeds at least have the sense to project themselves as sentimental chaps who go wobbly at the knees when they think of Harrods

Or so the new shareholders claimed. House of Fraser didn't believe a word of it, alleging instead that this exotic crew of investors was in league with Lonrho and Tiny Rowland, who had been laying siege to Harrods since 1977. If the allegation were true it would mean that Rowland had broken the Companies Act, which forbids "concert parties" of investors.

Cecil Parkinson, then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, commissioned a senior barrister, John Griffiths QC, to undertake an inquiry. He concluded that he could "well understand the suspicion": these people had bought their shares just before a crucial extraordinary general meeting, and they had all cast their votes for Lonrho, and they all had connections, past or present, with Lonrho. However, after using his statutory powers to "peer beneath the surface", Griffiths concluded that there had not been a "concert party". To that extent, the report exonerated Tiny Rowland. But Griffiths added that Rowland was "a consummate wheeler-dealer".

Rowland might well have replied that circumstances had obliged him to be one. Though he is almost as evasive about his personal history as the Fayeds, the following facts are known. His real name was Roland Walter Fuhrhop; he was born in 1917 in a detention camp in India, where his German father and Dutch mother were held as enemy aliens. In the early thirties in Hamburg, he was a member of the Hitler Youth. Then his parents moved to Britain where, during the war, he and his parents were again interned as enemy aliens.

One well-worn story about Rowland is that his first job after the second world war was as a porter at a London station, where he made good money by positioning himself beside first-class carriages as trains came in. This is not entirely true, but it ought to be: it reveals his eye for the main chance. Since then he has become adept at strolling up to first-class companies and catching the profits as they pull into the platform. His British interests range from Rolls-Royce showrooms to Scotch whisky distillers, from London casinos to Britain's oldest Sunday newspaper, the *Observer*. With hindsight, it seems inevitable that sooner or later his gaze would have fallen upon Harrods.

But it was equally inevitable that others would try to stop him. His consummate wheeler-dealing, which John Griffiths had noticed, had sometimes been rather too rough and buccaneering for comfort. In 1973, even a Conservative Prime Minister described Rowland as "an unpleasant and unacceptable face of capitalism". His robust business methods were the subject of several official inquiries. And in December 1981, four years after Rowland had begun buying shares in House of Fraser, the Monopolies Commission announced that a takeover of the whole company by Lonrho would be "against the public interest".

Tiny Rowland thus has more in common with Mohamed Fayed than he would care to admit. Both are foreigners who have not been entirely candid about their backgrounds; both have been roundly criticised by Department of Trade inquiries for using sleight-of-hand and jiggery-pokery to advance their businesses; both are interested in buying blue-chip concerns.

Rowland and Fayed are also both conscious of the profit to be had from cultivating presidents and prime ministers—but there the similarity ends. While Rowland has made a fortune in black Africa from his carefully nurtured friendships with leaders such as Kenneth Kaunda, in Britain he remains an outsider who believes that the establishment will always treat him badly. He is gloriously rude about the Great and the Good. Ted Heath, Norman Tebbit, Leon Brittan and Margaret Thatcher herself have all found themselves on the receiving end of Tiny's fruity invective.

It may seem strange to consummate a love affair with Thatcher by investing in a department store

Even the royal family has not escaped: in May 1973 Rowland telephoned his one-time friend and fellow-director Angus Ogilvy, Princess Alexander's husband, to announce that "I am going to crucify you and your family—I think you have behaved quite appallingly". He called Ogilvy a "rat". It is notable that Rowland has never been offered so much as an OBE, let alone the knighthood which men in his position can usually expect. Nor has Lonrho, in spite of its huge profits, ever been given a Queen's Award to Industry.

Rowland flaunts his contempt for the English ruling class by proving that he can buy members of that class. He doesn't pretend to be anything other than a hard-nosed businessman. It may well be that the Fayeds are hard-nosed business-men too, but at least they have the sense to project themselves as sentimental chaps who go wobbly at the knees when they think of Harrods. During his long siege of House of Fraser, Tiny Rowland had countless opportunities to suggest that owning Harrods would be a dream come true. Instead, he gave the impression that he fancied it merely because it was stupendously profitable.

Mohamed Fayed, on the other hand, goes to great lengths to ingratiate himself with those in high places, and to suggest that he is motivated by something loftier than greed. He sponsors equestrian events in which royals will be competing—polo, carriage-driving—and thereby, in effect, buys himself a seat next to the Queen for the afternoon. At the slightest provocation he will start babbling about his fondness for British traditions. Only last week he was boasting that he had reintroduced horse-drawn delivery vans for Harrods' customers in central London. It was Mohamed Fayed, lest we forget, who put up the money for that patriotic weepie *Chariots of Fire*.

Perhaps it takes a foreigner-on-the-make to feel (or at least feign) the reverence which is demanded by a place such as Harrods—just as 20 years ago, it was the Czech-born Robert Maxwell who saw the possibilities of the "I'm backing Britain" campaign. Tiny himself is a sort of foreigner, of course, but he can't or won't accept that the self-esteem of the British establishment needs constant doses of flattery to keep it alive.

One cannot imagine the words "I love Britain" coming to Rowland's lips as they do to Mohamed Fayed's. To win control of a part of the national mythology—as Harrods undoubtedly is—patriotism may not be enough. But it certainly helps. ●

**"House of Fraser Holdings plc: Investigation under Section 432(2) of the Companies Act 1985," HMSO, £45*

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Communities charge

Who was behind last week's poll tax riots? And will they damage Labour? Robert Crampton and Jolyon Jenkins report

It was a mixed week for the Union Jack. In Dorset, anti-poll tax protesters carried it as a badge of respectability. In Brixton, they burned it. The tax was the same; the people were a world apart.

It was a good week for Militant: it thrived on the oxygen of publicity. Its newspaper pointed out that "as thousands poured onto the streets to vent their anger in marches and lobbies, the paper was prominently on sale. And it kept appearing on the nation's TV screens... It is essential that *Militant* is prominent at every anti-poll tax activity." As a London seller put it: "People on the streets are no longer asking what the poll tax was; they want to know who is organising the opposition."... *Militant* is proud that for 18 months it has led the way in reporting and supporting the struggle against the poll tax. This is no accident. It reflects the leading role our supporters have played in the campaign for mass non-payment."

It was a worse week for Labour. Conservative Party chairman Kenneth Baker tried to establish a connection in the public mind between the violent demonstrations outside town halls, the Labour Party, and, subliminally, the winter of discontent and the miners' strike. To do so it was necessary to prove both that Militant was behind the violence, and that Labour was soft on Militant. Neither link in the chain was quite proven, although the *Daily Mail* on Saturday reckoned that "a desolate Neil Kinnock stood among the ruins of his poll tax dreams last night" as a result of the demonstrations.

We were at Lambeth town hall on Friday night, where 2,000 people gathered to protest, and where far fewer people later rioted. Were the rioters outside agitators? No: many were local agitators with no attachment to this country's political system whatsoever. They are part of an anarchist subculture, living rough or in dilapidated squats. For them, a "community charge" means running full pelt down a street with a brick in your hand and a "pig" in your sights. They are certainly not members of Militant—an organisation that demands sobriety and discipline.

In fact, there were perhaps only 50 hard-core leftists at the demonstration, although they formed its nucleus. The demonstration was "organised" only in the sense that newspapers were tipped off about where the action was likely to be that night (there was a protest at Southwark town hall the same night which got very little coverage). Only a handful of the leftists were selling *Militant*, and there were no Militant banners.

The Socialist Workers' Party was there in force. But then, the SWP has been conspicuous at every major street protest of the last decade. There were plenty of SWP banners, but some people had simply picked them up from the ground and had no affiliation with the party: many of them had torn off the "Socialist Worker" logo at the top.

A "community charge" means running full pelt down a street with a brick in your hand and a "pig" in your sights

And there was a smattering of other ultra-leftists, representing virtually every Trotskyist organisation in the country. One solitary man, wearing a hat with long furry ear-flaps, handed out leaflets from the Revolutionary Vanguard: "What the poor and oppressed have got to do is shove this ruling class offensive back in their face and shove it down their throat, so they choak [sic] on it. It's by pushing them back that the people make real advances and not, as the rulers say, by going through the parliamentary pig-sty."

Outside the central core were the "genuine" protesters, carrying home-made banners. "Not Militant, just angry," read one. "Brian Redhead fans against the poll tax," said another. "Say no to poll tax, it's unjust," urged a third. Its holder was a quiet 14-year-old middle-class girl, there with her mother. They knew about the demonstration, they said, because a leaflet had been pushed through their door. They didn't know who had published it. Other people said they had read about the protest in the local paper. On the fringes of the demonstration were the sightseers; a loose mass of people, many of them black (and therefore probably local).

According to a report in the *Times*, cited approvingly by Mrs Thatcher in the Commons, "Activists at English anti-poll tax meetings are using... 'runners'—members whose job it is to patrol the fringes of a demonstration gathering up people inclined to disband." This was not happening at Lambeth. But the Trots did control the tannoy system and took advantage of the unusual opportunity to harangue 2,000 people.

Tom, from Community Resistance Against the Poll Tax, said: "We've heard a lot about how it's the fault of Conservative councils. It's a lot of bollocks. Labour councils have never helped the working class. Labour councillors are every bit as reactionary as Tory councillors. Down with the Labour Party, down with the Tory party, down with all these bastards!" He urged people to sabotage their work-places.

A man from Workers' Power claimed that "the real outside agitators are the Tories who come in and destroy our lives and our living standards. I am an agitator but I have lived in Lambeth for ten years. I call on the working-class people to defend themselves with all the violence that is necessary."

Many of the people present were properly sceptical about this sort of thing. Earlier in the evening, outside Southwark Town Hall, there was this revealing exchange:

Speaker: Do you want the poll tax?
Crowd: No!
Speaker: Do you want this Tory government?
Crowd: No!
Heckler: Do you want a Socialist Worker?
Crowd: No!

When the violence came, it was not from the SWP or Militant but a group of youths whose main objective was to have a crack at the police (see box). At one point the master of ceremonies pleaded: "Can I just point out to whoever threw that last bottle, that you nearly hit the Lambeth Against the Poll Tax delegation." This was met with cries of derision. It really wasn't very important to many in the crowd who was hit by the missiles.

Both the Conservatives and Militant have a clear incentive to exaggerate Militant's involvement in the anti-poll tax demonstrations. Oddly enough, it's in Labour's interest too: by blaming Militant, it helps to distance the mainstream party from the uglier scenes on television last week.

This suggests that Kenneth Baker will decide that there's only limited mileage in playing the Militant card. When he calls on Neil Kinnock to "condemn" the violent demonstrators, he will find Kinnock irritatingly ready to oblige. Compared with previous "condemn" calls, over violence in the miners' strike, or Labour councillors' rebellion over rate-capping, this one is easy: it is not "our people" whom Kinnock is

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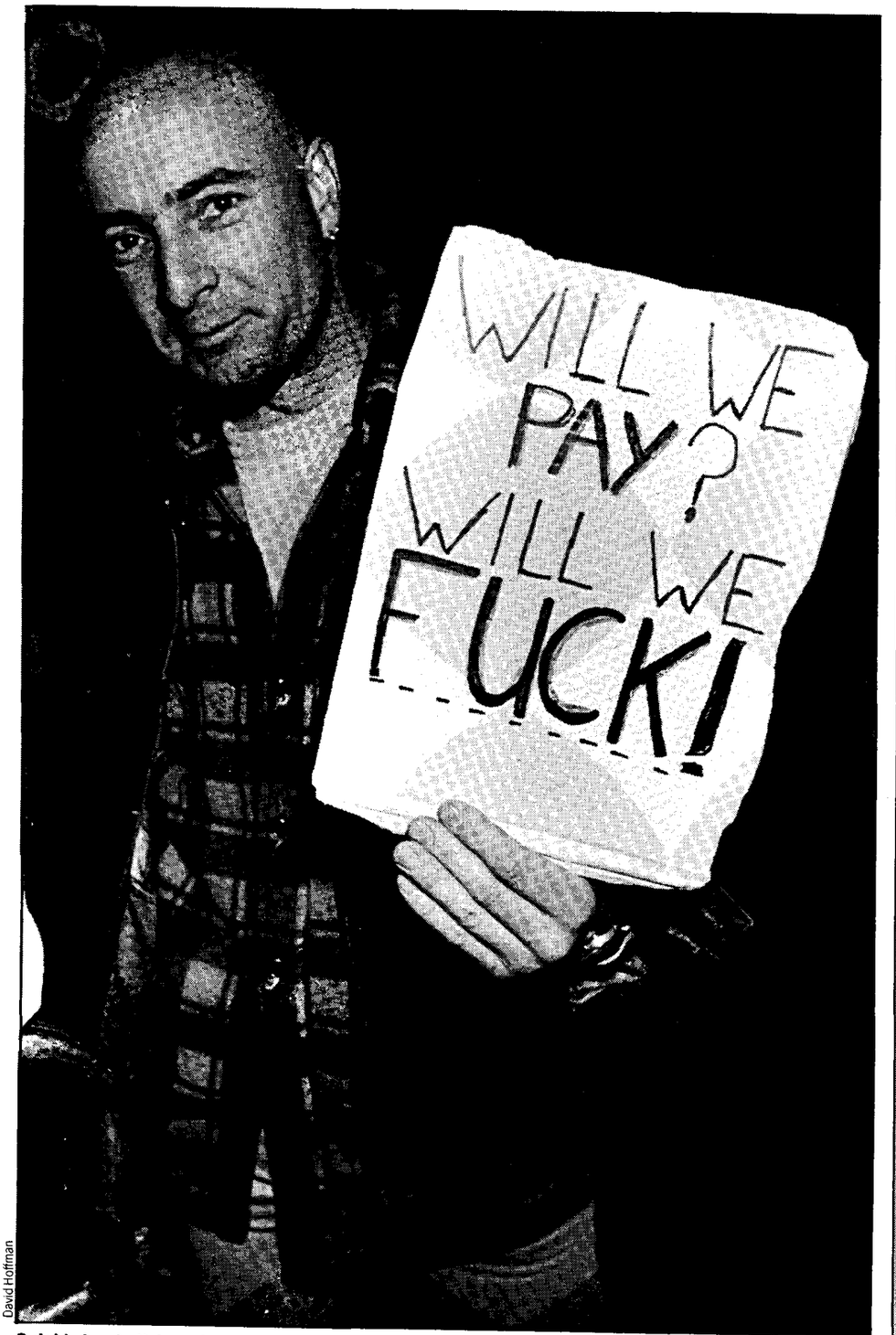

David Hoffman

Outside Lambeth town hall on Friday night

being asked to disown, but the very people he has been busily expelling from the party.

According to Joyce Gould, Labour's national organiser, Militant is all but a spent force in the party, with only a few hundred remaining members. Apart from the expulsions of the past few years (nearly 200, she says), many Militants are not renewing their Labour Party membership. Last week's events, she predicts, are likely to speed up the purge. "It's a matter that I am sure will be raised at the next National Executive Committee meeting. And I think a number of constituency parties who have not done anything in the past may well take action now." Publicly cracking down on Militant has never harmed Kinnock before.

Now that almost every council has set its poll tax figure, there is unlikely to be much more violence outside town halls. The next date for the anti-poll tax protester's diary is 31 March—a national demonstration in London. Militant will be there. The demo will be the starting point, it says, for a campaign to force a general election. According to one leaflet: "If 'people's power' can bring down the Stalinist dictatorships of Eastern Europe, then it can bring down Thatcher here." And in her place? Why, a "national plan of production" and "public ownership of the top 200 monopolies". Sounds familiar. ●

"When the crowd moved into Brixton road, some started throwing cans at a bus. A few bounced off the windscreen, terrifying the black female driver. As people passed the bus, they banged the emergency exit open and shut.

Then the crowd moved into the high street and milled around. The march went down the high street, still free of violence, with police running along the pavement to reinforce the police station. Cars and vans tooted their support. There were hoots and whoops and whistles. Passing under the railway bridge, the noise was exhilarating. The march met a double line of police, and wheeled left into Stockwell road, where the riot squad were waiting up a side street.

Four young men, two black, two white, began methodically breaking bricks out of a traffic island with a paving stone. I watched them for about a minute. They wore masks over their faces and acid house shirts and tracksuit trousers. They looked as though they had done this before. I had not seen them, nor anyone dressed like them, on the demonstration. I moved back a little, because splinters of rock were flying up off the bricks. A civilian car pulled up, the driver saw he was in the middle of a riot, and reversed out of it very smartly with a screech of rubber. To the right, up a side street, several policemen crouched by a van. To the left of them, in amongst the parked Mercedes, were at least a dozen photographers. Flash bulbs illuminated the policemen as the first half-bricks came over. I counted about a dozen before at least fifty boiler suits with shields pounded past the cameras to the traffic island, and went left, right and straight on in pursuit of those people who ran.

I got too near a police van. A milk bottle —intended for the van, I assume—hit me on the head. "That was a journalist you pillock!" shouted someone I was with. "So what! They're all the same!" came the reply. The back of my head quickly matted with blood, and it spilled onto my coat. It was 10pm, but under the TV and police lights, the injury must have been visible.

A few moments later, a lone panda car was surrounded and overturned about 100 yards up Stockwell Road. The young policeman inside was beaten up and gone before I got there. Again, the whole scene was a blaze of flash bulbs, bouncing off the opaque windscreen of the Metro. Small-scale skirmishes followed for the next hour, until the police, having dispersed them, coralled most demonstrators back into Stockwell Road.

Later, I'm told, groups reformed, joined up with other people leaving the UB40 gig at the Academy, and attacked the town hall. I wasn't there. I was waiting in Hackney hospital to have my head stitched up. I had to wait four hours. There was only one doctor on duty after midnight."

Robert Crampton

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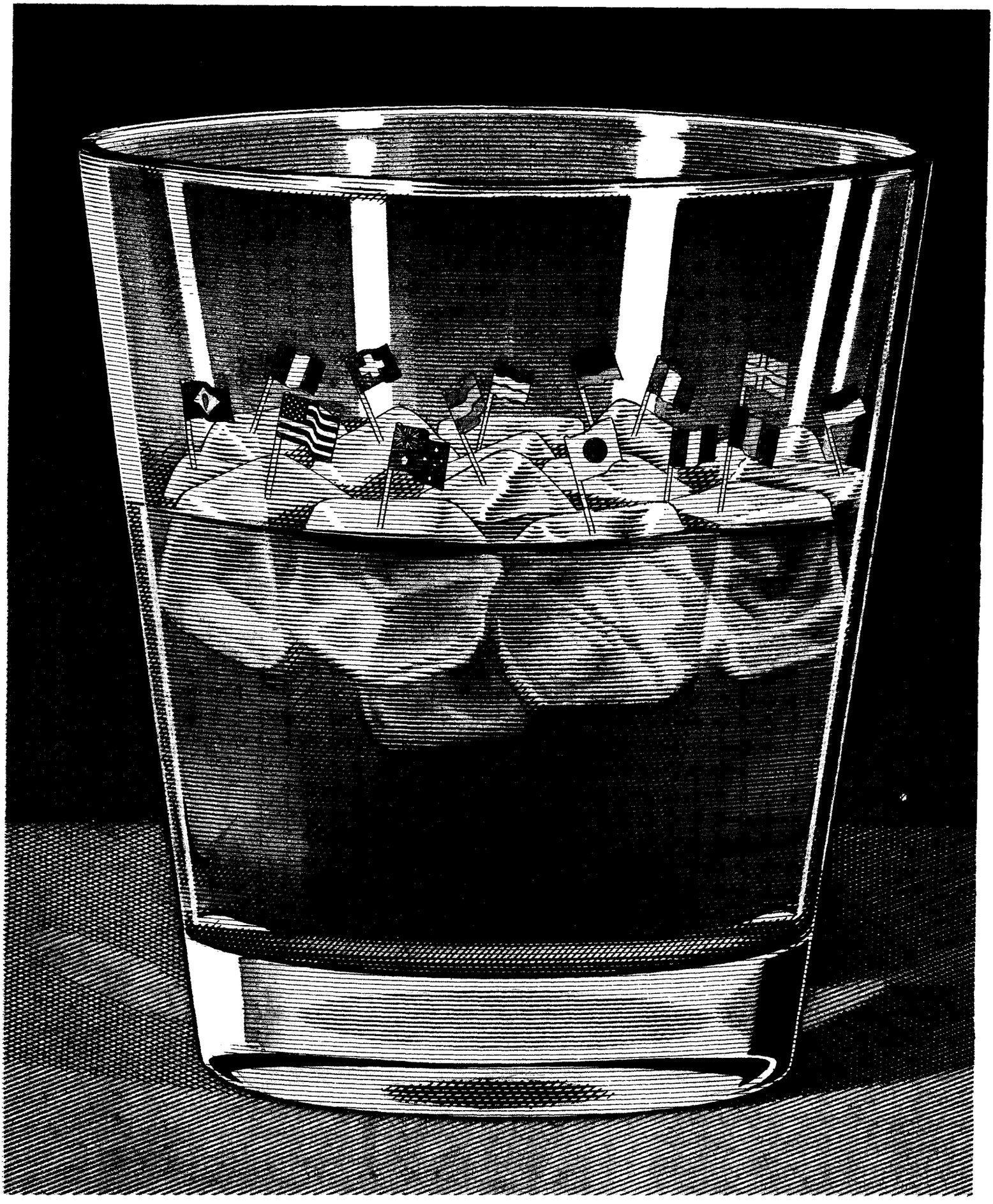

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Power play

The big boys from the west have taken over the East German election, says Paul Hockenos

East Berlin

Just down the road from Checkpoint Charlie, the old district offices of the Communist Party buzz with flashing xerox machines, international press crews and the clatter of manual typewriters. In the offices, now campaign headquarters for a dozen opposition groups, activists are frantically preparing for the 18 March parliamentary elections. But as the first "free" election since 1949 approaches, the forces which were at the forefront of the mass movement that toppled the ruling party now stand isolated on the periphery of their own democracy.

The two major players in the forthcoming election have their West German patrons. First, there is the SPD-East, which is backed by the West SPD. Second, the Alliance for Germany, a coalition of the Christian Democratic Union-East (CDU), Democratic Awakening, and the Democratic Christian Union. The Alliance is supported by Kohl's CDU.

The stakes are high. The vote here will determine the party or coalition government that will in some way merge with Bonn upon formal unification—and thus determine whether West Social Democrat (SPD) candidate Oskar Lafontaine or Chancellor Helmut Kohl (CDU) is the first postwar chancellor to preside over a united Germany.

With Konrad Adenauer's slogan "No experiments" implicit in their message, Kohl, the SPD and their GDR sister parties have successfully rallied popular consensus into their "safe" camps, and away from the independent activist groups who want an alternative system in the eastern third of a united Germany.

No one has been more effective than Kohl in his claim that East Germany is nearly ruined and needs reunification. But his recipe for renewal is harsh. His uncompromising policy, which has earned the name Anschlusspolitik, after Hitler's annexation of Austria, includes a currency union as soon as April that may put 2 to 3.5 million people out of work. Such a measure, and the possibility of full-scale privatisation without laws to protect East Germans' property rights, frightens people.

Yet with more west Deutschmarks than it can spend, and with the energetic presence of Kohl, the Alliance is beginning to do well. A week ago, it seemed impossible that it could challenge the SPD; now one can't be sure.

The SPD itself is still favourite to lead the next government, although its support is plunging, and the latest opinion polls give it 24 per cent of the vote. The party's traditional roots in the east on part of pre-war Germany, and western financing to the tune of $3 million, have enabled it to gain prominence in a remarkably short time.

The way unification is going now, our people will be left like beggars on the streets

Under the leadership of one-time communist dissident Ibrahim Böhme, imprisoned for a year for his work in the left opposition, the party has all but merged with its western counterpart. It seems to agree with the basics of Kohl's annexation plans, but is demanding that transition from a state-controlled to a market economy should be cushioned by social guarantees, environmental legislation and property rights.

The party's manifesto at its recent congress, in fact, is actually to the right of that of the West SPD. Unlike its sister party, the SPD-East declines to call itself "democratic socialist". It may be that the renewed sympathy with the Communist Party (which stands at 17 per cent in the latest poll) is a sign that the SPD has moved too far from socialism

With meagre east Deutschmark budgets, allocated by the state, the opposition groups have put their own coalitions together and are fielding candidates in each of the 15 regional districts. All of the groups rule out a coalition with either the revamped Communist Party, which has reconciled itself to a new role in the opposition, or with the Alliance. While some activists still hold on to a remote hope of joining the SPD in a government coalition, most have set their sights on gaining at least limited representation in the 400-seat Volkskammer.

The coalition Bundnis 90, composed of New Forum, Democracy Now and Initiative for Peace and Human Rights, is the strongest of the activist groupings. The coalition has a detailed left-of-centre, "anti-politics" platform, although it refuses to use the discredited term "left" to describe itself. It emphasises its non-ideological, grassroots nature, falling somewhere between a political party and a citizens' movement. The development of a broad, participatory democracy at every level of society—from community initiatives to direct presidential elections, is at the centre of its agenda.

The three groups, with a membership of 200,000, advocate a "social ecological market economy", which includes extensive education, health and job training programmes, as well as heavy investment in alternative energy sources to replace coal and nuclear power.

New Forum economist, Pavel Strohner, sees no contradiction between the free play of market forces and democratic control over economic decision-making. "We know that neither a centrally controlled socialist economy nor a capitalist market economy can adequately address people's needs," says Strohner, who is running as a candidate in Rostock. "But a market economy based on human and natural potential, with an outlook towards the future, not just the here and now, can come a lot closer."

The coalition supports the unification process, "but not at any price". A bloc-free Germany and radical disarmament measures are necessary for a stable, peaceful Europe. It calls for concrete legislation, such as the right to work and the right to housing, to protect GDR citizens during the transition to a market economy. The country needs at least nine months to prepare itself for market competition, says Strohner.

Strohner argues that the SPD's promises of an early currency union and far-reaching social guarantees cannot be fulfilled at once. "The way unification is going now our people will be left like beggars on the streets," he says. Industry needs time to replace its old production methods with new ones that can hold up on the market. Otherwise, "they'll simply slide straight into bankruptcy and we'll be faced with massive unemployment."

The majority, unfortunately, don't seem to be listening to such prophecies. In East Germany, small no longer seems beautiful. The big boys have taken over. ●

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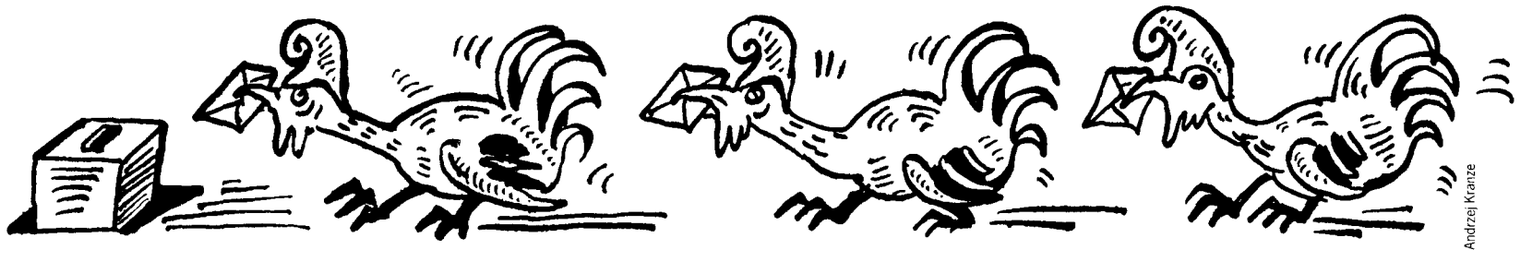

Andrzej Krauze

Parti games

Life après Mitterrand and the next election preoccupy French Socialists. David Bell reports.

While British socialists can hardly remember when they last had power François Mitterrand and the French Socialists have enjoyed power for so long they think it belongs to them. And yet, as they meet at Rennes for their annual conference, all is not well.

It is highly disquieting that, decoupled from Mitterrand with his presidential glamour, the party performs poorly; the right is a regular winner in by-elections, and by most measures the climate of opinion is with it. In the Assembly the party technically forms a minority government, although it is extremely unlikely that the opposition, from the right to the communists, would come together to defeat it. The internal state of the party is no healthier.

The Socialist Party claims 200,000 members and has claimed this as long as anyone can remember. The true figure could be as low as 50,000. The leadership is ageing and, unlike other socialist parties, virtually excludes the working class. Party organisation is a big problem and, although there are no inspiring solutions, it is a main part of former prime minister Laurent Fabius's appeal that he wants to somehow reinvigorate the party.

With the disappearance of the marxist left, the Socialist Party has no big idea and, not surprisingly, 61 per cent of the French public see no difference between left and right. The party has no freehold on power and the immediate problem facing the Socialists is how to avoid another power sharing with the right after the next general election (1993). One possibility is to continue to pitch for the floating vote in the centre or to woo the ecologists which will be a very difficult operation. In politics, every silver lining has a cloud.

At Rennes, and for the first time since 1979, the strength of the competing factions will be measured. The prospect of life après Mitterrand—even though the next presidential election is not until 1995—has set the faction leaders at each other with a passion. Everybody, including the man who works the xerox machine, is running for president but the party leadership is also in question. There are seven different factions presenting motions at Rennes (inevitably known as the "seven dwarves").

The principal division is between Prime Minister Michel Rocard and the rest, but there is also a division between those who hate Rocard and those who loathe him (that is between the Mitterrand supporters, Lionel Jospin and Michel Fabius). The Congress will be like Yeats' Ireland: great hatred, little room.

As to the factions themselves; Rocard, the only begetter of market socialism, has that reward reserved for people who are right too soon—universal opprobrium. As prime minister he has concentrated on creating wealth, squeezing wages and spending, and promising redistribution later. With such a profile it's not surprising that he can't turn his sweetheart status with the public into party support. Moreover, Mitterrand does not want to pass the party to him. Rocard does offer a possible alliance for 1993 which avoids a deal with the hated centrists and that is an alliance with the Greens (currently at about ten per cent). But neither the activists nor the leadership is keen on red-greenery.

Everybody, including the man that works the xerox machine, is running for president

Mitterrand's supporters are divided between Jospin and Fabius. As far as the party is concerned, Fabius's star has been rising for so long that it is in danger of bursting out of the universe, but he has not shown himelf capable of winning. On the contrary, Fabius has made mistake after mistake. In a catastrophic TV debate he achieved the impossible task of making Chirac appear sympathetic. Other disasters followed: a disavowal of the President, the loss of the party leadership when it was there for the taking, a dismal result in the European elections and speeches of buttock-clenching embarrassment. Yet Fabius is as modern as tomorrow, the man who gave Rocard a violent word-whipping in 1979 ("in between the Gosplan and the market there is... socialism") now disputes the paternity of market socialism with Rocard.

Jospin, the other "dauphin", is also a victim of the President's unwillingness to provide an apostolic succession but is in reality a sort of political moon who emits no light of his own. Jospin was party leader from 1981-88, but was not only unable to renovate the party; he actually ran it down. As Education Minister, he holds the prime portfolio in Rocard's government (where resources are concentrated) but has made no impact on opinion. On strategy, Jospin has written off the opening to the centre and wants a negotiation with the Communist Party leadership.

Jospin is supported by many of the major figures in the Socialist Party. These include Pierre Mauroy, current party leader, who may yet save his job, although no party leader has ever been so unpopular; and Jacques Delors. Although quiet at the moment, Delors is due to return from the European Commission next year and will re-enter politics as a major presidential contender.

Of the four other contenders, the biggest is former left-wing defence minister Jean-Pierre Chevènement. At a loss for other things to do, he has attacked the EC plan for uniting Europe. This was a crass attempt to hang Delors out to dry but Chevènement's incontinence of focus means that he may yet hit on something even if he is slated to get it in the gizzard (7 per cent perhaps).

The smaller factions at Rennes, not household names in their own households, are the macho right of Marie-Noëlle Lienermann, which sounds like J S Mill as rewritten by Trotsky (all self-management and freedom). There is the preposterous Jean Poperen who was ousted by Jospin from the number two position at the last Congress and has taken it badly. Poperen has shown an exquisite potential for disaster and has produced a motion so five-star naff that is difficult to take it seriously. Julien Dray has a motion accusing party archons of being out of touch—which is like being called ugly by a toad.

The mourning after the knife will produce a composite motion. Unity will be preserved because that is what a party of government requires but the conflicts are deep, the clashes are violent and the hatreds are real, even though it is a bit like hearing the Sex Pistols played in Palm Court style. ●

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New Statesman & Society at the ICA

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Monday
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The end of Superwoman?

with Shirley Conran, whose "Down with Superwoman" has recently been published, Ros Coward and others. Chair: Jenny Murray ("Woman's Hour")

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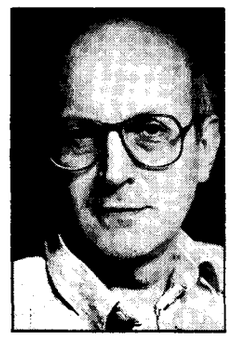
POLITICAL COLUMN

Safe as houses?

Kinnock has successfully rebuilt his party. But his attitudes remain defensive and unimaginative



Stuart Weir

Who could ask for anything more? The polls show that they're already 20 per cent ahead of the Tories who are now reeling in confusion. The anti-poll tax riots are as nothing by comparison with the vicious infighting in the Tory ranks in parliament and minor rebellions over the poll tax are breaking out in the party in the country. The economy is in a mess, interest rates remain punishingly high, home-owners are receiving their higher mortgage demands in the post and the pound is weakening.

And that's just this week's good news.

Next week brings the prospect of a tough budget from a Chancellor, further boxed-in by flakey trade figures, and an astonishing by-election victory in the Tory heartlands. Just over a year ago Labour achieved a 12.4 per cent swing to come within an ace of taking the Vale of Glamorgan, and that gave an encouraging boost to their poll ratings. Just contemplate the electoral benefits that the capture of mid-Staffordshire, on a swing of at least 12.9 per cent, will bring. The public will begin to associate Labour with winning...

It's just possible, of course, that the oxygen of publicity that the Tories have so assiduously given to Militant's active part in the anti-poll tax demonstrations, and their mouth-to-mouth-to-mouth resuscitation of dying memories of "trade union violence" at Grunwick, during the miners' strike and at Wapping may have damaged Labour's standing in mid-Staffs and elsewhere. But Neil Kinnock's foresight and courage in breaking up organised Militant regimes locally and driving the tendency's members out has surely distanced the party from any real harm here? Doesn't Baker look just too like a pantomime villain as he hisses through his sneers and smears? Isn't the new model Labour Party, above all, safe?

Labour Rebuilt is the apt title of a new book by two admiring journalists, Colin Hughes and Patrick Wintour, about the process of making the party safe. Apt because it conjures up the image of a house, a solid brick-built house like the wise Little Pig's house. Mrs Thatcher may huff, and she may puff, but she won't blow the house down and eat Little Pig. Not again.

I'm not decrying the skills and imagination which professionals like Peter Mandelson, Philip Gould and Deborah Mattinson put into building this house. Nor the committed staying power of people like Kinnock himself, Tom Sawyer and Larry Whitty, which made it possible. I am not denying to need to make the party electable, to take poll data seriously, to meet the electorate's fears about extremism, to give the party a good image. That's been done, and the party is enjoying the benefits.

Who could ask for anything more? Well me, for one.

For what comes through the Hughes/Wintour account is the continuing caution of Labour's politicians. For them the policy review was an essentially *defensive* exercise. Loads of anecdotes illustrate this, but perhaps the central one is the continuing insistence that the policy package should be uncostable and largely free of commitment. This caution not only inhibits new thinking—you can almost hear Charles Clarke, Kinnock's aide, wince every time Bryan Gould floats a new idea—but often smothers decent old thinking in an obfuscatory fog. Who has any idea, for example, of how redistributory Labour would be in office?

A Big Idea wouldn't stand much chance of being adopted even if it were left on Walworth Road's doorstep

Worst of all, this defensive caution prevents the party from seizing the political initiative. It's Mrs Thatcher's blunders and her party's cowardice which have put Labour in front, not a positive appeal to the electorate's imagination. I am not asking here for a Big Idea, which anyway wouldn't stand much chance of being adopted even if it were left bawling on the Walworth Road doorstep. (There's an old adage with which Labour greets any demanding new idea: "Don't open that can of worms".) I am asking rather for more politics, less pollitics.

On the principle that you should choose initiatives in which your leader believes, Labour should most obviously take up the European banner with a great deal more fervour. As Martin Kettle has observed (Political column, 9 February), Kinnock is an enthusiastic and knowledgeable European in Europe, but not here. The strategy seems to be a cautious decision to stay windwards of Thatcher, but not to be too conspicuously European. The polls tell Labour that the public now accepts that Britain's future lies in Europe; and that an important shift took place in the second half of 1989, as opinion moved from being broadly in favour of Mrs Thatcher's "tough line" (48 per cent gave their approval, 39 per cent didn't) last May to being broadly disapproving: 46 per cent against 38.

What the polls don't seem to have explored is broad public attitudes to Europe. Obviously, there are plenty of negative attitudes, especially among older people. But my sense is that the young are conscious of a Europe out there which is more prosperous, more harmonious and cleaner than their own country; a Europe in which public enterprise demonstrably works. If Labour could, so to speak, accentuate the positive and demonstrate that its own wider aims flow naturally into the largely social-democratic consensus which has created a more modern Europe, it could perhaps create, as well as catch, the spirit of the times.

Right across the centre-left, from the *NSS* and *Marxism Today*'s New Times to the Liberal Democrats' aims and values document, there is a groping after ways of managing the political economy after the European/Scandinavian model—a model which rejects the naked economistic pursuit of market efficiency and promotes ideals of social consent and consensus, in the belief that social partnership actually gives you a more productive economy as well.

The trouble for Labour's conservatives (if Tebbit will allow me to use the term) is that this means finally taking a far more flexible view of sovereignty, both in European and national terms. It means, in other words, that Labour must come to terms both with the new democratic agenda and the demand for a more popular form of politics.

Quite how unsuited Labour's leaders are to this historic change was shown at the Scottish conference last week. Behind the scenes arm-twisting fudged the significant issues and avoided the use of that subversive term, "proportional representation". But only if the party's attitudes towards democracy and sovereignty are clearly stated can Labour become a truly modern and European party.

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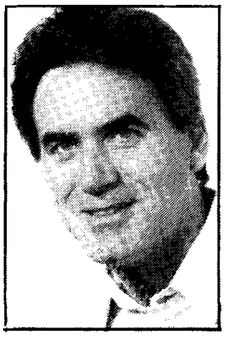
Us and Them

Englishness is a myth that needs debunking, argues Cairns Craig



I was in a Chinese restaurant in San Francisco last year when two young men arrived—striped shirts, red braces, blue suits. Aggressively drunk and loudly assertive, one of them fell unconscious, slumped across the bar, when he went to order drinks. Everyone recognised them: *English*. The English of Mrs Thatcher's dynamic new Britain. For a Scot, this is a fascinating reversal. Not many years ago all Scots were assumed to be disguised partisans of the army. Now English has given a new term and a new terror—the lager lout—to Europe.

C H Sisson, the poet and anglo-royalist, once suggested that the English did not suffer from the affliction of the Scots and Welsh—the affliction of always having to define themselves. A decade of Thatcherism has afflicted England with a desperate need to discover the meaning of Englishness. It may be the England of the new right, with its stress (as in the historical writing of Jonathan Clark) on the continuity of English institutions against the tide of modernity and democracy. Or the England of the disenchanted new left of Patrick Wright's *On Living in an Old Country*—in which the country is seen locked into what Tom Nairn has called "the glamour of backwardness".

The latest contribution to identifying Englishness—John Lucas's *England and Englishness: Ideas of Nationhood in English Poetry 1688-1900*—falls into a category which has become tempting to the left in England. For Lucas, the authority of the poet rests on his ability to speak for the nation: but the poet can only voice the national identity fully when he speaks for "people" against their masters. The story of English poetry is of its struggle to place itself alongside the forces of liberty, and then the story of its baffled withdrawal from that struggle into private consolations in the face of an industrial society for which it had no language.

For this tradition in English thought, literature is extremely important, because literature attests the *imaginative* validity of what was never actualised—an England organised by the true values of the English people. The continuing strength of the literature attests to the continuing vitality of that radical Englishness. The political tradition, like the poetry, is (in the words of E P Thompson) "enriched by the experiences of the 17th century and is carried through the industrial revolution to the present. This meant that the English "did not pass, in one generation from the peasantry to the new industrial town. They suffered the experiences of the Industrial Revolution as articulate, free-born Englishmen."

What is important about this conception of the making of Englishness is that it is entirely a *self*-making; it owes nothing to outside forces and is unbroken in the self-enriching continuity of its experiences. We can see the force of this vision if we compare such views of England with a parallel description of Wales.

Reviewing a history of Wales, Jonathan Clark wrote that "the Welsh tried to keep their show on the road but simply failed. They were not robbed: if the English were drawn in, it was to fill a vacuum... the industrialists rushed so easily only because the bards had already ceased to tread Welsh soil. There could only be a 'void'." Wales is left empty, void, failed, ripe for colonisation by an England which, in its plenitude, is like nature, and abhors a vacuum.

The last decade has afflicted England with a desperate need to discover the meaning of Englishness

What is expressed in this iconography is not history but ideology. By its self-engendering continuity and by the fact that it had everything first (first bourgeois revolution, first working class), Englishness becomes the foundation of how we ought to understand the world as a whole. Nothing outside England is needed to understand Englishness; but Englishness is essential to understand everything else.

New right and new left are united in adopting this ideological structure as the starting point for defining Englishness. And what is essential to it is that Englishness should be a completely *internal* creation of England. It is a mythic conception of England which needs radical revision: it breeds isolation, complacency, a refusal to acknowledge the reality of other people's identities both inside and outside its borders.

Throughout Europe, nations are being reborn out of the rubble of the Russian empire. To understand these nations and their national identities as "ruritanias" or as recent "inventions", or as threatening a Balkanisation which is disruptive to the stability of the world order (ie, the security and wealth of the major powers of the world) is to fail to see what is vital. That people's identities are made and unmade in a continual dialogue between what they inherit (whether fictional or real), what they have to confront on their borders or they have imposed on them, and what copy from elsewhere.

To refuse to see that people need to make their identity in conditions where they do not have the option of unbroken continuity with their own past is to deny validity to the identities of the vast bulk of the human race. It also makes it impossible to see the issue of the significance of those identities except as the wearisome problem of people who refuse to enter "our" modern world—leaving their identities behind as they do so. Thatcher's insistent isolationism in Europe and the Labour Party's commitmenmt to the inviolability of Westminster constitutionalism are, equally, the expression of this myth of self-generation.

But there is, of course, an entirely different way of seeing Englishness: Englishness as the creation of England's relationship with an outside world with which it was deeply engaged through commercial and colonial rapacity; Englishness "invented" as much by outsiders (Swift, Goldsmith, Scott, Carlyle, Eliot) as by insiders; Englishness as just another mixed identity in the European brew.

If England is to participate in the transformation of Europe that now seems possible, it has to cast off the idea of its fenced-in, self-generating past. It has to recognise that the English (like the Estonians) were as much *made* as self-making, and that their value systems, however powerful, are as local and provisional.

A pluralistic model of the national past which allows reciprocity between national traditions is essential if we are to engage in restructuring a Europe of many identities and many traditions. If socialism is to prosper it has to come to terms with a Europe where nationalism is not going to go away, no matter how often the great powers try to assert the value of their own self-generating traditions of "liberty" under the pretence that theirs alone are not nationalistic.

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The dream budget

Stephen Smith and Mark Pearson advise the Chancellor on how to penalise the rich, help the poor —and save the planet

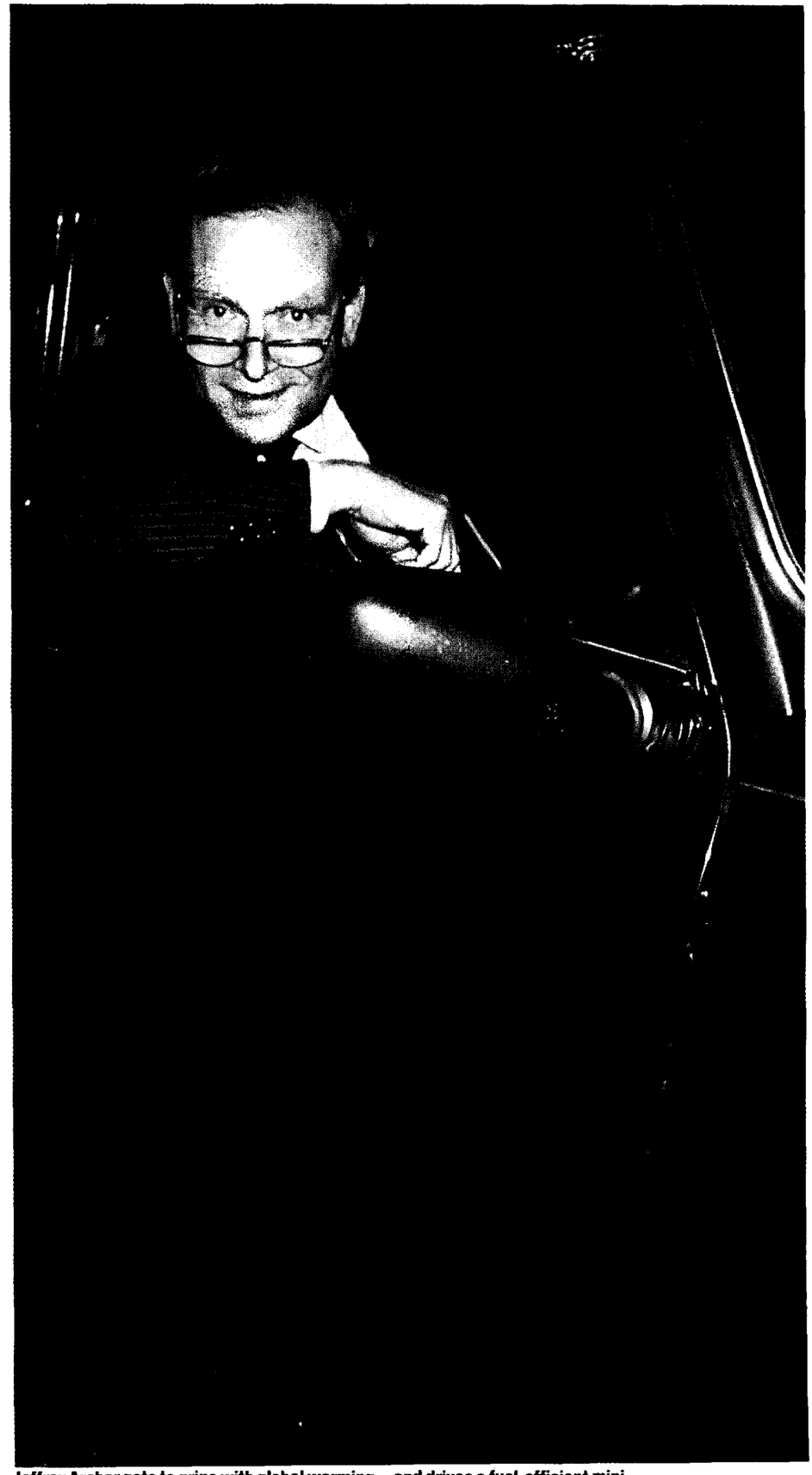
Next week's budget may well be one of the least exciting in living memory. The Chancellor will almost certainly do nothing that might push up inflation even higher—which in many areas, of course, means that he will do nothing. Even those who have stocked up on booze in the hope of profiting from the usual duty rises may well be disappointed.

Any chance that Environment Secretary Chris Patten may have had of slipping new anti-pollution taxes into the budget now seems to have gone. Stopping pollution inevitably means raising industrial costs, and affecting prices, wages and employment, as well as profits. And where the polluter is an ordinary citizen—using an aerosol, driving a car, turning the central heating up—the inflationary consequences of making the polluter pay through higher taxes would be even more direct.

Even if inflation were low, governments are hardly likely to rush to introduce stronger environmental controls, because they can conflict with other important policy objectives. Behaviour which is environmentally most damaging can in other respects be socially desirable. Burning fossil fuels warms not just old people but the atmosphere too. Fertilisers keep food affordable for the poor, but result in unacceptably high concentrations of nitrates in water.

If action is taken to reduce pollution, it is a sad fact that those who will feel the effects most are among the most vulnerable in society. The two areas where pressure to reduce environmental damage are the greatest—food and energy—are also those which take up the largest proportion of the household budgets of the poor and elderly.

For example, of the average single pensioner's weekly budget of just over £50, over a quarter goes on food, and 15 per cent on gas and electricity. The average one-parent family also spent over a quarter of their income on food, and around 10 per cent on domestic energy. By contrast, rich two-earner couples with children



Steve Finn/Alpha

Jeffrey Archer gets to grips with global warming—and drives a fuel-efficient mini

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Household spending on goods which might increase in price if environmental controls were tightened

	Single pensioner		Rich dinkies		One parent family (2 or more children)		Two adults 2 children	
	£ per week	% of income	£ per week	% of income	£ per week	% of income	£ per week	% of income
Average income	51.33		560.39		118.35		342.83	
Spending on food	13.24	25.8	47.56	8.5	30.14	25.5	47.88	14.0
Spending on fuel, light and power	7.22	14.1	11.72	2.1	11.94	10.1	12.25	3.6
Spending on motoring	0.93	1.8	48.49	8.7	5.46	4.6	27.76	8.1

Effects on family income if VAT were put on domestic energy (negative means worse off)

	Single pensioner		Rich dinkies		One parent family (2 or more children)		Two adults 2 children	
	£ per week	% of income	£ per week	% of income	£ per week	% of income	£ per week	% of income
No further change in tax or benefits	−1.08	−2.1	−1.76	−0.3	−1.79	−1.5	−1.84	−0.5
All taxes reduced proportionally	−0.85	−1.7	2.26	0.4	−1.39	−1.2	0.19	0.1
All benefits increased proportionally	1.11	2.2	−1.54	−0.3	0.95	0.8	−0.72	−0.2

Tony Garrett

spent a mere 8.5 per cent on food, and only 2 per cent on gas and electricity, out of an income of over £550 per week.

Yet a tax on carbon dioxide emissions, or an energy tax, to reduce the rate of global warming, has become one of the front-runners for an environmentally friendly tax policy. And a tax on the nitrogen content of fertilisers would ensure that farmers bore at least some of the environmental costs following from the pollution of the water system.

Taxes on power stations would lead to a significant increase in the cost of electricity, which would encourage reduced energy use. Logically, the Chancellor should at least put VAT on domestic fuels. In Britain we have long enjoyed zero-rating on gas and electricity—unlike anywhere else in the EC. In other words, we make energy cheaper than other goods, whereas if we were to make prices reflect environmental costs, it should become *more* expensive.

Putting VAT on domestic gas and electricity would, according to our estimates, reduce domestic energy consumption by 6 per cent—hardly enough to make much of an impact on global warming, but a start. Unfortunately, the rich would hardly notice the change, and would continue to consume as much as before, whereas the poor would cut their consumption by around 10 per cent. The extra VAT on energy paid for by the poorest 10 per cent of households would be around £1 per week, and that of the richest 10 per cent, around £2. Given that the richest group is sixteen times richer than the poorest, VAT on energy would worsen the distribution of post-tax income in the UK. Controls on carbon dioxide emission in general would do likewise, as would fertiliser taxes.

Stopping pollution will raise prices. But whether this leaves the poor worse off depends on what else governments do

But to leave the discussion at this would be to ignore what happens to the tax revenue raised by VAT on fuel. What actually happens to the £1,700 million which would be raised is extremely important.

A natural reaction of most environmentalists is that it should be used to encourage home insulation and other energy-saving measures. It may be true that we spend too little on such activity (and the current tax system is hardly helpful) but using all the tax revenue in this way would still leave the poor worse off. It would seem fairer (and politically easier) to give the money back to voters.

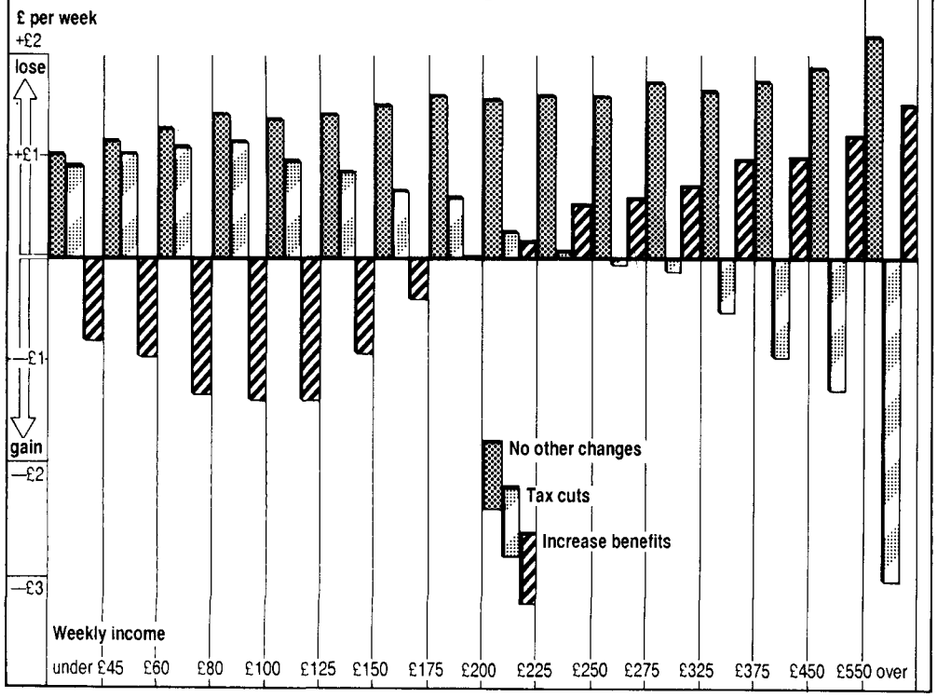
If this were done simply by cutting the general rate of taxation, then because the poor don't pay much tax, they end up worse off overall (see graph). Putting VAT on energy, but cutting taxes by the same amount, leaves richer households substantial net gainers. But if it was redistributed by increases in pensions, child benefit and other social security benefits, then the poorer households would be the net gainers. With fertiliser taxes, which would raise the price of food, much the same things can be said.

Of course, some green taxes will penalise the rich. Unlike food and household fuel, spending on private motoring rises strongly with income and would, superficially, have few distributional drawbacks (the average pensioner spends under 2 per cent of their income on cars and petrol, whereas those with incomes above average spend nearer 10 per cent). To raise petrol prices to their peak level of 1975 would require an increase in duty and VAT of 63p per gallon, which would cut consumption by over 8 per cent in the short term (more in the long term, as people switched to smaller, more fuel-efficient cars) and would raise three billion pounds. This is not as radical as it sounds: the UK tax rate would still be below that in Italy.

Even here, however, there is a distributional problem. In rural areas public transport is poor or non-existent, and cars are a necessity, whatever your income. Even an increase in spending on public transport of £3 billion would be unlikely to ensure good public transport in the remote parts of the UK. The distributional problem might be mitigated by abolishing the annual £100 road fund licence (at a cost of £2.4 billion), which would leave the current average cost of motoring little changed, but would raise the cost of travelling each extra mile.

There is, therefore, no reason to be afraid of environmental controls because of their effects on the poor. Stopping pollution will raise prices, whether done by regulation or taxation. But whether this leaves the poor worse off depends on what else governments do. Green taxation will hurt the poor as well as reduce pollution, but at the same time give governments the wherewithal to more than compensate them, and ensure that the rich bear the brunt of the costs of protecting the environment. Mr Major won't, of course, but he could, if he wanted to.

Effects of putting VAT on domestic energy



Tony Garrett

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What's your handicap?

Prejudice and bigotry, says Mike George, are what the disabled have to put up with at work

Richard & Sally Greenhill

If he can fix *his* van, he could fix *your* van. Yet how many garages would be willing to take the chance?

There are nearly two million disabled people in Britain of working age. Only 31 per cent are in paid work, compared to 69 per cent in the general population. Many are too ill to hold down a job. But around a quarter of a million are unemployed and available for some kind of work. Within this figure are people with disabilities who are unable to work, not because they can't find a job, but because they lack the basic aids for independent living. Stuck at home, they find they are cut off from information on training and employment opportunities as well.

Poor employer attitudes play a large part in the underemployment of disabled people. For instance, the 3 per cent quota—firms with over 20 people should have 3 per cent or more represented by disabled people—is routinely ignored, and prosecutions are almost unheard of. Germany, by contrast, has a 6 per cent quota, and those employers not meeting it have to pay a levy into a public sector training fund for the disabled.

Employers have also tended to look at people's disabilities, rather than their abilities, and only give them menial jobs. The public sector is not much more enlightened: fewer than a third of public employers meet the quota. It's significant that the number of people registering as disabled for quota purposes is declining. Many now regard registration as a barrier to getting work.

Support services run by the Department of Employment and the Training Agency have been of little help. Brian Lamb, campaigns and parliamentary officer at the Spastics Society, attacks the contents of available training courses as far too restricted for its clients. In addition, disablement resettlement officers—a lynchpin of the service—are often overloaded. Most, indeed, have only had half a day's training on each of the major disabilities. The Royal National Institute for the Deaf, in particular, is critical of the level of facilities for people with a hearing impairment at Jobclubs: only seven out of 1,005 Jobclubs nationwide give specific support to the deaf. And last year, just 247 disabled people were given financial help to adapt their homes—with wheelchair ramps, for example

WELFARE WATCH

Stay single

Social security minister Nicholas Scott looked decidedly jittery rejecting an opposition amendment on poll tax rebates at the end of the Social Security Bill's committee stage last week. The clause did not actually mention the poll tax. It simply proposed that, when a married couple apply for a means-tested benefit, they should be allowed twice as much capital as a single person before their benefit is reduced.

At present nobody can claim income support or family credit if they have more than £6,000 capital. The furore following the April 1988 benefit cuts led to the limit for housing benefit being raised from £6,000 to £8,000. Poll tax rebates, too, are subject to the £8,000 limit. But in each case the same limit applies to a couple (married or living "as husband and wife") as to a single person.

The debate centred on poll tax rebates, for the obvious reason that the poll tax is a tax on individuals which ignores marital and other relationships. If two people are charged twice as much as one, should they not have twice as much capital ignored in assessing their rebate entitlement?

Scott's defence of the *status quo* was that a capital limit of £16,000 for a couple "seemed on the high side" and that the capital limits for means-tested benefits had been the same for single people and couples for a long time. Both arguments are valid, as far as they go, but they do not go very far. As Clare Short pointed out, two friends living together are allowed £16,000 capital, and so are a brother and sister, a parent and grown-up child, or a gay couple. Yet a married or cohabiting heterosexual couple can only have £8,000 between them.

Things began to look bad for the minister when Tory MP Keith Hampson entered a plea on behalf of a couple in his Leeds constituency, facing poll tax demands of £350 each instead of £180 rates. With savings over the £8,000 limit, they will have to pay the full £700. The husband is threatening to divorce his disabled wife so that they can divide their savings and both claim rebates.

He was followed by another Tory, Tim Devlin, who pointed out that the same "we've been doing it a long time" argument had been used to oppose the policy of taxing husbands and wives separately, until the government decided to do it.

Sensing the minister's embarrassment, Clare Short withdrew the clause so that it could be tabled again when the bill is debated on the floor of the House, possibly next week. It should then attract substantial support from Tory backbenchers who, two years ago, forced the concession on capital limits for housing benefit. Helping couples with savings over £8,000 will not go far towards remedying the unfairness of the tax, but it could rally a few thousand wavering Tory voters.

Tony Lynes

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—to make getting out of the house easier.

The government, recognising that something needed to be done, set up an "internal review" of the support services a few years ago. After long delays a consultation document is finally expected at the end of March.

Most disability organisations expect the review to emphasise a greater role for the voluntary sector. In fact many bodies, like Mencap, already run their own training and employment projects which have been set up *because* existing services are inadequate. Government proposals are likely to be double-edged—formally acknowledging the expertise of voluntary groups, while at the same time minimising extra public expenditure.

Neither will the review tackle the central issue of discrimination. Disabled people in Britain have no recourse to equal opportunities legislation—unlike some other EC countries—and no amount of collaboration with voluntary sector initiatives can make up for the lack of this basic civil right.

Another key issue for disabled people is Britain's poor provision of aids—including wheelchairs and artificial limbs. Disability surveys show that this is why thousands of people can't even get onto the first rung of the employment ladder: if you can't get around, how can you get to work, or attend a training programme?

So bad was the system that the government created a new national body in 1987—the Disablement Services Authority—to do something about it. In its few years' existence, it has started to end a near-monopoly among suppliers, reduce large regional variations in quality of service, and encourage development of new powered wheelchairs (helping up to 24,000 people to live independent lives). Disability groups are near-unanimous in praising the authority's efforts. But unfortunately it will be disbanded this autumn, with services going back to regional health authorities. Kath Savage, a wheelchair user on Trent Health Authority, is convinced that this will result in the service being downgraded as other parts of the NHS compete for the health authorities' increasingly limited resources.

With an underlying unemployment rate of nearly 30 per cent among disabled people, something more radical must be done. First, the financial disincentives of the social security system must be changed to enable more disabled people to work. Second, anti-discrimination and equal opportunities legislation needs to be extended. And if there is to be a quota, and there are those who argue otherwise, it needs to be higher than 3 per cent (6 per cent would more fairly reflect the numbers of disabled people in the population who are of working age) and backed with effective sanctions. Third, the current employment and training services need a complete overhaul. And fourth, provision of aids to help encourage maximum independence must be a priority. With these measures, several hundred thousand people could get jobs.

In the meantime two million disabled people will have to put up with piecemeal tinkering, and continue to be, largely, debarred from mainstream employment.

FRINGE BENEFITS

Into the red

Colin Ward

Entrepreneur is a word with an endlessly changing meaning. It first meant someone who got up musical entertainments. In Victorian economic textbooks it meant the instigator of a commercial undertaking. Now it means someone who uses other people's money to persuade us to spend beyond the prudent limits of our credit.

When you lose your creditworthiness they write you off as a bad debt and move on to the next sucker. If you take your faint greenness seriously, you should rejoice that the downturn in retailing is making dents in all those posh names like Habitat, Sock Shop, Laura Ashley, Debenham, Next, and so on.

Beyond the entrepreneurs of consumerism are the entrepreneurs of property acquisition and development. They are big, powerful and destructive, and local planning authorities are wary of challenging them. They know that the big battalions of professional expertise will be brought in to win the proposal on appeal to the Department of the Environment. Their speculation depends upon sucking in the major retailers, and they in turn rely on us to provide a return on investment.

In one of our local towns there's a planning application from a firm called Citygrove-in-Town for a £15 million shopping development named, characteristically, Malthouse Court. One Sudbury citizen, Brian Allt, has been pushing for a public exhibition (which will happen) of the plan, and for town meetings to discuss the proposals. The council itself falls back on "experts", Donaldsons and Development Planning Partnership, to assure us that the scheme is viable, and who is Mr Allt by comparison?

Well, he's like me. He watches what actually happens. We have two big towns in our patch, Colchester and Ipswich. In the first of these Tesco used to have a site in the High Street. They then sold it off and built a new store in St John's Street, covered with acres of the kind of handmade roof tiles that you and I can't afford. Before the paint had flaked they closed it and moved on elsewhere. Sainsbury's had a new hypermarket at Lexden on the fringe of the town, and once it had killed off the local shops, they moved further out. In neither case has anyone else occupied the empty premises. While the property boom lasted, nobody worried, as the buildings continued clocking up capital gains for the investors in Britain's urban regeneration.

In our other big town, Ipswich, the lessons of the shopping revolution stick out like sore thumbs. One minor disaster is the Carr Street precinct where few shoppers go. The other was truly spectacular: the Greyfriars Centre—a vast complex of shops, a multi-storey car park and some office towers. From the moment it was built it became an emptily sinister clockwork orange.

Ironically, this postwar disaster was reflected in the black glass facade of the building opposite, Norman Foster's Willis Faber Dumas building, visited by architects from all over the world. Eventually that firm took it over, demolished the shops and reclad the office blocks.

But, undeterred by failure, Legal and General have embarked on an even bigger shopping development in the heart of the town, between the Buttermarket and the Old Cattle Market. This is planned to contain two big stores, 40 smaller retail outlets and a 450-space car park. No one has told me how those cars will get there since the council has tried for decades, sensibly, to steer cars out of central Ipswich. Nor has anyone told me how many existing shops in the surrounding streets will die.

The back of this development faces the drab and spartan bus station which can't even provide a covered space for village people shopping in Ipswich. It has already levelled a cheap cafe, a fish-and-chip shop and a low-price, low-rent greengrocers. Unimaginable in the new development.

But current changes in the retail climate have led to the architects writing to the contractors to say that: "Due to our client being unable to authorise the Buttermarket project to proceed, they are instructing us to formally terminate arrangements." The builders have now pulled out their workers and machinery.

The *Guardian* (28 February) tells us that "retailers' costs are rising by far more than inflation just as their sales volumes have stopped growing. Result: misery." But misery for whom?

Why, the property speculators who lured the footloose multiples in on low rents (currently subject to huge increases) in the first place, because every advisor told everyone else that property was a better investment than industry. But now the developers are desperate to maintain confidence: they have invested so much already. So they encourage retailers to get into debt, retailers encourage you to get into debt. It's the entrepreneurial spirit, isn't it?

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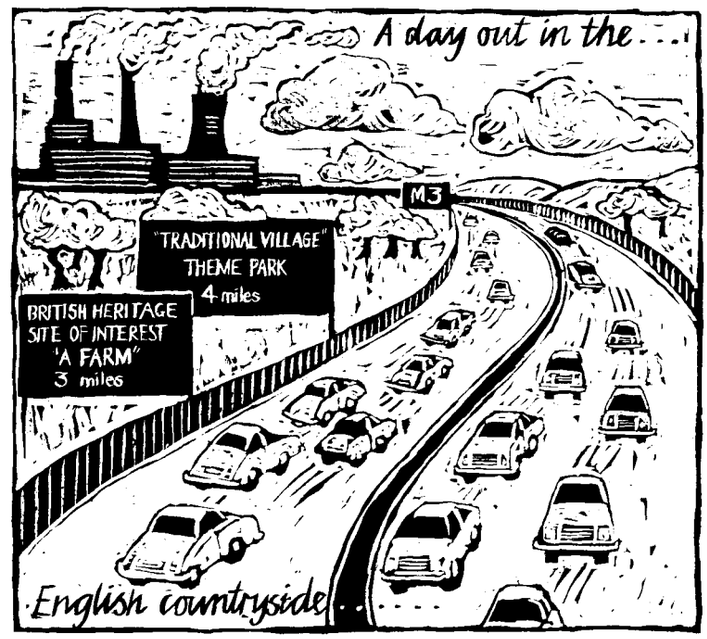
Society Today is *NSS*'s term-time page for sociology students

Open Season

Pat McNeill looks at the forces which have created the British countryside—and sees the farmer under attack


A day out in the . . .
M3
"TRADITIONAL VILLAGE" THEME PARK 4 miles
BRITISH HERITAGE SITE OF INTEREST "A FARM" 3 miles
English countryside

Judy Stevens

Two announcements were made a fortnight ago which, between them, seem to epitomise an aspect of British social life today to which sociology has not yet paid enough attention.

First, the Transport Secretary, Cecil Parkinson, announced that part of the new M3 extension would be built in a cutting through Twyford Down, a beauty spot near Winchester. Local environmental groups have campaigned against such a plan for over 15 years, arguing in favour of tunnelling through in order to minimise the damage to the scenic beauty of the area and to the remains of Iron Age forts and other ancient sites. Such a conflict of interest is not unusual but it is significant that Mr Parkinson defended his proposed route by saying that it would be designed to run through agricultural land rather than through the open downland. Thirty years ago, the priorities might have been reversed.

The second announcement was that planning permission had been granted for the development of a massive "theme park" on Rainham Marshes in Essex. The unsuccessful opposition to this proposal had come mainly from people interested in the marshes as an important habitat for birds and other wildlife.

Between them, these stories embrace all the major interests competing over the future of the countryside: farmers, developers, road-builders, ecologists, conservationists, the leisure industry, local residents, visitors, and people concerned with Britain's historical "heritage". Just as the contemporary countryside reflects past conflicts of interest, so the outcome of current conflicts will determine its future.

The discipline of sociology was born of the social turbulence of industrialisation. It has tended therefore to concentrate on urban issues. Rural sociology and the sociology of the countryside have been relatively neglected. From the 1930s there was a school of thought which tried to establish a link between settlement patterns and ways of life, arguing that there was a rural-urban continuum. But this model was discarded in the light of new research in the 1960s. Since then, there have been very few specifically sociological attempts to explain the processes of rural change. The work of Howard Newby is the exception.

For centuries, the major role of the countryside was to provide food. Except for the wealthy nobility, able to indulge in hunting for recreation, the rural population regarded the land primarily as a workplace. Country people depended, directly or indirectly, on agriculture for their major source of income, in cash or in kind, and were relatively unconcerned with questions of natural beauty. The notion of landscape-as-beauty was a creation of the rich in the 18th century, when they constructed parks and views to match the ideal images of the landscape painters of the time. The functional activity of farming was not allowed to intrude into these picturesque vistas, unless suitably contrived to add to the merits of the view from the terrace of the great house.

Towards the end of the 19th century, the major threat to the countryside was perceived to be from spreading urbanisation. The National Trust was formed to buy threatened sites, buildings and areas of particular beauty. By the 20th century, and especially between the wars, the desire of town-dwellers to get out into the countryside for recreation (combined with the improved transport that made this possible), led to clashes between landowners and ramblers. Pressure groups such as the Council for the Preservation of Rural England and the Ramblers' Association were founded at this time.

During the second world war, the threat to food supplies generated the Dig for Victory campaign, in which people were encouraged to use every available inch of land to grow food. Farming was a key part of the war effort and it was taken for granted that farmers were the best people to safeguard the countryside. State subsidies to farmers were introduced on a massive scale, with a system of price guarantees being introduced in 1947. The intention was to produce more and cheaper food by every means possible.

Developments in agricultural methods since then have been largely the result of this intervention rather than of the free market. This has encouraged the creation of large specialised farming units, involving substantial capital investment. The exception is the special case of small hill-farms where the subsidies have been aimed more at preserving rural communities than producing large amounts of food.

Since the early 1970s, the European Community's Common Agricultural Policy has complicated matters. Its priorities are not those of British policy and an early consequence was the great overproduction of food and the appearance of the notorious butter-mountains and wine-lakes. At the same time, the ecological consequences of some modern intensive farming methods became widely known. From being the guardians of the countryside, farmers became the villains. Overproduction has now led to a reduction in subsidies and the introduction of quotas. Ten million acres is scheduled to be taken out of cultivation in the next few years.

What is to happen to these acres and to the countryside as a whole? The interests of conservationists are at odds with those of farmers. The use of the countryside as a playground for city-dwellers brings excessive wear-and-tear on the very beauty-spots which draw people to them. The wish of rural commuters and second home owners to preserve the "traditional" village where they have bought property conflicts with the interests of the locals whose livelihood depends on the creation of employment. New motorways provide no direct economic benefit to those who live in the areas they pass through, but are supported by the road lobby.

The politics of the countryside are a key issue of the nineties.

Discussion:

What planning and development policies are needed for the countryside?

Newby, H (1986) "Green and Pleasant Land?" Wildwood House. Newby, H (1988) "The Countryside in Question" Hutchinson

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Musing over power

Is the Muse still relevant as an image of writerly inspiration? And if so, who and where is she? Is it helpful to liken a writer to a medium possessed by spirits?

Michèle Roberts, the novelist and poet, whose latest novel "In the Red Kitchen" (Methuen) is just published, ponders these questions

My commonest worries during 4am wakefulness are about my overdraft and whether we can afford to get the roof fixed and keep the rain and the pigeons out. I stave them off by composing fictional narratives: pleading letters to my bank manager asserting the imminent arrival of royalty cheques. Real consolation, however, comes from inventing the voice of my grandmother. Dead years ago, she still pops up for me when I'm in trouble: oh you fibber, you storyteller, what you need is a nice bowl of gruel, oh those draughty lodgings of yours. Cut down

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The Muse as allegory of feminine power and capacity? Painting by Henri Rousseau (1909)

The Muse inspiring the Poet/Bridgeman Art Library

to child size, I can usually get back to sleep.

One solution to debt is to try and earn a bit of money from journalism, so an additional recent worry is whether I can meet the deadline for this essay. Essay: an attempt or endeavour; an irregular undigested piece; which may not appeal to my bank manager's love of creditable statements.

Thinking of Nana who so delighted me in childhood with her made-up bawdy rhyming stories, I'm at my desk in the bedroom alcove. Stuck to the wall on my left are postcard portraits of some of my favourite writers: Charlotte Bronte, Marina Tsvetayeva, Colette, Gertrude Stein, Simone de Beauvoir, Toni Morrison. On my right, postcard reproductions of details of paintings, showing angels, sibyls, pregnant madonnas, virgins, nymphs, nudes. Why this split between pictures of authors active in the outer "real" world and these images I have chosen to represent aspects of my inner life? Why can't I mix them up together on one wall?

My separation of the two sorts of postcard helps me, I think, dramatise and visualise a couple of questions that have nagged at me for several years now. Is the idea of the Muse still relevant as an image of writerly inspiration, and if so, who and where is she? Is it helpful to liken the writers to a medium possessed by spirits?

I was brought up, at school and at university, to think of the author as male, a powerful and superior Father whose word was law, an authority whose intentions and viewpoint directed our reading. Novels were windows onto reality, with meanings that clever students could discover. The author's own meaning was the correct one. The essays I tried to write according to these premises proved bewildering, boring, impossible. I happily escaped into scribbling poetry and stories in secret.

Slowly I discovered that, along with many others, I was a delinquent and insubordinate reader, refusing to genuflect automatically at the shrines to literary heroes both ancient and modern. I began to read between the lines of their novels. I enjoyed arguing for my own interpretations of novels and poems, drawing on imagination rooted in experience and dreams. I found that the gaps and silences in a story could suggest to me as much as the words explicitly told. This was empowering. It turned books into a dialogue between reader and writer. It was fun. I joined in the general proclamation: the Author is dead; long live the active and creative process of Reading.

It wasn't until my own early stories began to be published, until readers and reviewers began giving their own versions of my works, that I realised that although I preached the collaboration of the reader in the writing process I also wanted to hang on to all the old privileges of the Author. Male authors deserved to have their writerly selves melted down into a flow of conversational words. After all, hadn't they benefited from the linguistic rules which placed men as Law-speakers and women as Other, containing all the passive, irrational and mad bits men didn't want in theselves?

I wanted to be that God-Author the fundamentalist Christians believe in, who tippexes out the opposition with floods and plagues

But I'd so recently composed a female self with inklings of wholeness, I wanted to keep it, thanks very much. I wanted to say that my version of reality was *the* reality, which meant continuing to believe in social realism. I wanted to control the reader, have her discover the meanings I intended. I wanted to be that God-Author the fundamentalist Christians believe in, who dictates the truth and tippexes out the opposition with floods and plagues. The feminist practice of confessional writing, which I subscribed to, didn't help: I was still unconsciously believing in priests, their patriarchal power to absolve my female sins. Similarly I was placing my women readers as bad mothers liable to judge and punish me.

One way to cope with this problem was to deny its existence, to deny that writing had

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anything to do with gender and power structures, to insist that women wrote exactly like men.

My only way out, however, was to let go of wishing to control and instead discover the pleasures of just diving into language, swimming about in it, letting myself become part of a play and dance of words. I found that words were alive, connecting with each other in multiple and changing ways, piling up in layers of complicated meanings, playing tricks, composing worlds of their own rather than describing the One True World.

Letting this happen was not only an exhilarating process. It was painful and frightening too. I feared getting lost in chaos, irrationality, the unconscious, forever. The unknown that the dance of words represented could be threatening. Letting myself begin writing my first novel in this new way seemed to involve trusting the world that was not-me, that came bursting in when I opened up to it, that changed me and dissolved me. Gradually it's become easier, less scary, as I discover how much I enjoy what it gives me.

The sexual analogy is obvious. Learning to trust a lover and experience pleasure through wanting what I'm offered rather than letting my hunger control us both has been linked to these discoveries about writing. The spiritual analogy works too. I find occasional oceanic feelings of oneness with the natural world are less disturbing than formerly, even if they're not always approved of by some reviewers when I try to describe them.

Unconscious. Lover. Earth. All of these words resonate for me, suggest something outside-me that's powerful, sometimes anxiety-provoking, sometimes joy-inducing. All of them are signposts pointing to another word. Muse.

Originally the Muses were plural, nine sister goddesses who were the offspring of Zeus and Mnemosyne (Memory). Later, the term came to be applied in the singular to the inspiring goddess of a particular poet, as when, in the sixteenth century, Philip Sidney reports: "Foole said my muse to mee, looke in thy heart and write."

Male painters have often depicted a beautiful young woman or the model currently inspiring them as the Muse. She is discovered by the gaze of the viewer who is assumed, according to the rules of hetersosexual culture, to be male. This presents a female onlooker with problems. Does she identify with the male look, denying her gender, or with the woman-object? While the painted Muse is an allegory of feminine power and capacity, simultaneously she can be used to disqualify women's aspirations to create. No no, our place is to inspire men and pose for them, keep them warm, run the practical side of life. However, if we gaze at the Muse as men do, can we enjoy letting out the lesbian in us who likes looking at naked women? What about the power relationship, though? *Is* the Muse as passive as she sometimes seems?

Alice Walker is a contemporary writer who has taken this problem on board and used it to empower her writing. Working with words rather than paint, she describes the Muse (my term not hers) as less many-faced than many-voiced. She claims that her characters (in *The Color Purple* or *The Temple of My Familiar*) arrive, possess her, demand to be known, help to dictate the novel she is trying to write. Traditionally in white western culture, women hearing voices, though claiming to be inspired by God or the gods, have been written off as mad, for their possessed speech betrays conventional logic and disrupts patriarchal authority. There's the danger for women employing marginal strategies; they may get a little more of what they want but they may be constrained by the strategies too. As Juliet Mitchell remarked once, the carnival after all, happens on the cathedral steps.

As a white woman only at the start of learning about the different strands of black writing, I could easily misunderstand what Alice Walker means when she talks of receiving these inspirational visitors from another world. But I feel that perhaps her image of writing as connected to some sort of spirit possession might be a way of making contact with the lost African community, the psychic reality of the ancestors. The idea of being a medium for characters to speak through enacts a struggle to break free of the chains of the language the writer is born into, a struggle for all writers, but one with particular resonance for writers defined by racist meanings.

Alice Walker's "guests", arriving from the depths of her imagination as "real", offer her a relationship with equals which then becomes the model for that between her and her readers. At the same time, they allow her to claim a confidence (rather than a patriarchal Authority) in her part of the dialogues between writer and reader. Finally, they may serve as helpful guides unravelling a narrative thread in and out of the labyrinth of words.

Psychoanalytical writers also have suggested that a voice coming from outside can help inspire language. They are referring to the model of the nuclear family, in which the figure of the father interrupts the blissful duo of mother and baby and their mutual babble of bill and coo, propelling the child into desire and language, into saying I want.

Apollo and the Muses/Bridgeman Art Library

"Originally the Muses were plural, nine sister godesses, offspring of Zeus and Mnemosyne"

Some feminists argue that since that language expresses patriarchal structures of relationship, we need to listen back through it to that first love affair with the mother (love for other women as our birthright), re-imagine and re-capture its sounds and rhythms in our writing, let them subvert our 'normal' grammar. This is a way of reading that can be applied to male writers like Henry James and James Joyce. Writing from the 'feminine' position can be undertaken by either sex.

Certainly, in listening for that lost voice I shared and made up with my mother, I find a strong Muse, who both nourishes and provokes. Sometimes she sounds like my grandmother. She hasn't, so far, tried dictating letters to my bank manager.

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With my parents and brother (Boris Yeltsin in 1939)

Out of apathy

AGAINST THE GRAIN: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY
Boris Yeltsin; translated by Michael Glenny
Jonathan Cape £12.95
THE OTHER RUSSIA: THE EXPERIENCE OF EXILE
Michael Glenny and Norman Stone
Faber & Faber £14.99
VOICES OF GLASNOST: INTERVIEWS WITH GORBACHEV'S REFORMERS
Stephen F Cohen & Katrina vanden Heuvel
W W Norton £14.95
STALIN: A TIME FOR JUDGEMENT
Jonathan Lewis and Phillip Whitehead
Thames/Methuen £14.99
THE SECOND SOCIALIST REVOLUTION: AN ALTERNATIVE SOVIET STRATEGY
Tatyana Zaslavskaya
I B Tauris £19.95

Robert Service

What emerges from all these books is the extraordinary resilience of the peoples of the USSR. The interviews with emigrés gathered by Michael Glenny and Norman Stone give a voice to those who fled their homeland for the west. It is an unusual form of *glasnost*. The saga of the three great waves of Russian emigration has not often been told. But equally gripping are the testimonies collected in *Voices of Glasnost*.

In this case the interviewees are not the regime's out-and-out opponents but rather reformers, mainly party members, working for change from inside the political system. These reformers are "Khrushchev's children". Early in adult life they experienced the torrent of De–Stalinisation unleashed by the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956. Some of them were already aware of the horrors of the Stalin era. As Jonathan Lewis and Phillip Whitehead make clear in a biography which is a model of succinct and up-to-date information and is worth buying for the pictures alone, Stalin had manicured his image so that the rising generation should remain in ignorance of his barbarities. But the truth seeped through even before his death.

Today's leading reformers—Yakovlev, Zaslavskaya, Aganbegyan, Afanasyev, Burlatski—knew each other intimately in the Khrushchev years and protected each other in the Brezhnev era. They made their case mainly behind closed doors. Nearly all of the interviewees in *Voices of Glasnost* recurrently lost jobs or were threatened with the sack. Tatyana Zaslavskaya had visits from the KGB as recently as 1983 when the proceedings of a conference in Novosibirk on the country's social problems and economic decline were published in western newspapers. Len Karpinski received his party membership back only in 1988.

Fyodor Burlatski argues that the mind-set of a regime is never changed by "dissidents", and that the decision of the reformers to work within the limits set by the regime has been justified by the Gorbachev phenomenon. This is a convenient self-justification. Whether the reformers alone truly shaped the minds of the post-1985 pro-reform leadership is debatable. Sakharov and Solzhenitsyn were major cultural forces; and their criticisms of the Politburo almost certainly accelerated the decline in self-confidence of the central party apparatus.

Nevertheless, several reformers, from scientists like Velikhov through to sociologists like Zaslavskaya, were undoubtedly making intellectual headway with Mikhail Gorbachev even before he became general secretary. Gorbachev himself, moreover, was changing his mind even before the reformers got to him, as shown by his now-revealed memorandum on agrarian reform. This was sent from Stavropol to the Central Committee in 1978 when he was only a regional party secretary.

There was a recognition that the USSR's economy in particular required drastic attention. This understanding was far from being universal; but it was becoming more and more widespread. The Brezhnev era was therefore not wholly a "period of stagnation". Without the development of new ideas before Brezhnev's death in 1982, Gorbachevism would be literally unimaginable. The problem was that Brezhnev stopped "the new thinking" from spilling over into decisions on policy.

What has united most reformers is a hope that "the system" is reformable. By and large, they remain critical loyalists. From personal experience, some go further in their criticisms than they have revealed in the interviews. But several feel annoyed at the behaviour of Boris Yeltsin. This is paradoxical. Yeltsin, too, has said the political structure and its attendant ideas have a healthy core. He professes a commitment to a socialism within the Leninist heritage. His campaign against corruption in Mo-

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scow is greeted warmly by reformers. But irritation with his resignation from the party leadership in 1987 persists.

Some suggest that, having been at the apex of power, he could have influenced events more by remaining in the Politburo. Now, however, he holds the stage of the Congress of People's Deputies. His popularity, as the recent elections in Sverdlovsk showed, is growing. He attracts thousands to his rallies, and his populist harangues and tirades against Gorbachev's demands for greater personal authority are deeply approved. But where's the beef? What is the Yeltsin alternative? His policies are far from precise. If he were to replace Gorbachev at the moment, *perestroika* would lose the manipulative skills which has brought it such success as it has won.

Mainly inadvertently, *perestroika* has exacerbated economic and national problems. Yeltsin's calls for "social justice" have considerable appeal, and he exhibits a sensitivity to shifting popular moods. How do we explain the emergence of this extraordinary man, an ex–member of the notoriously stultifying party machine? The answer is surely that this machine has always needed local secretaries who were self-reliant and self-assertive. Otherwise the one-party system of government would long ago have collapsed. Even Stalin needed such functionaries.

The emigrés in *The Other Russia* could have been expected to appear as the extraordinary people they are. Unless they had money and friends, they had to survive hard times while escaping and building a new life in the west. Russian aristocrats who become dustmen in Cannes have a gripping story to tell. Boris Yeltsin's autobiography is more surprising. No ex-member of the Politburo has been so verbally colourful about his life and times. He admits to the ways he had to cajole and bully in Sverdlovsk, where he was party secretary before the summons to Moscow and to promotion. He confesses freely to an "awkward" personality, and retells the saga of his spats with Gorbachev.

He also can tell jokes against himself. At his baptism, he reveals, his granny had to pull him out of the font where a drunken priest had dropped him. He has an adversarial temperament. Chapters make repeated mention of his "enemies". It is entirely credible that his ebullient, contradictory character and popular slogans will enable him rebuild an impressive career in the evolving politics of his Russian heartland. The formulation of a realistic alternative reform programme has yet to happen.

Page three stunner

BIMBO
Keith Waterhouse
Hodder & Stoughton £11.95

Sally Vincent

I still think of it as the b-word. I doubt I've over-used it, except in anger at the odd irritating executive johnny in his thirtysomethings. This is at least etymologically correct in that "bimbo", from the Italian-Americanism meaning small baby, was originally bandied about to describe a uniquely male condition. In Wodehouse stories and American gangster movies of the thirties, bimbos were always men. Silly men. Silly *little* men. Men of militant naiveté and childlike arrogance.

For some curious reason there are a lot of them about nowadays, which is doubtless why the past year has hosted the big turn-round, the wresting of the b-word weapon from those who might wield it and its redirection towards the sort of helpless girlies any decent person would think were already on the receiving end of enough derogatory epithets. If I owned a newish dictionary, which I don't, I'd probably find the party line has already been toed and "bimbo" is now formally a soppy tart (excl. fem). At any rate, Keith Waterhouse wouldn't have got very far outside the Women's Bookshop if he had nailed the bimbo syndrome to the masthead of popular culture with a grinning old Etonian Y-word sociopath with joined-up eyebrows and an Armani suit.

What he has done, one trusts for much pleasure and profit, is invent a bimbo based on one of those anatomically extraordinary young women in whom men's most exuberant affections for their wives and babies is miraculously embodied. This mother-baby image, baby-round face, baby-round eyes, baby-round pout, joined at the neck to hugely swollen, lactating breasts is clearly a vital ingredient for the continuance of proper familial sentiment in the British male, who must get his daily page three fix of all that is true and wonderful or run amok.

Not surprisingly, any young woman prepared to sacrifice the gift of her appropriate bits and pieces to the patriotic cause is lavishly rewarded and must be forgiven for imagining herself a pretty damned important member of society. Unless you think that the aspirin is to blame for the headache, you would have to agree with her. Waterhouse has given her 223 pages to be pretty damned important, which I suspect is agreeing with her about a hundred pages too enthusiastically, but that's another thing you can't blame her for.

What we have here is one Debra Chase, page three popsy or, as she prefers, top model, who confides— with a touching faith in the universality of their appeal— the details of her rise and fall in the sleaze trade to a tape recorder shaped like Marilyn Monroe's lips. Between the old and new icons, the transcript is filtered through a man with enormous comic talent and what I can only describe as ingenuous cruelty. The joke, see, is that the poor cow gets the words all wrong, ain't got no grammar and can't even spell. Vernacular narratives I always find fatiguing, and though I'm prepared to see this as a personal failing when it comes to the classier realms of modern black literature, I suspect Waterhouse's ear for the Sharon 'n Tracy mode is a touch tinnier than he thinks it is. Certainly the humour to be derived from the educationally underprivileged is considerably more limited.

The flavour of bimbohood, then, is caught somewhere between evocations of Mrs Malaprop and a sort of libidinously absent Moll Flanders. Such psychic energy as she does possess is channelled into a passionate subscription to the tenets of the gutter press and her own determination to become a celebrated child of its mythology. Hence the sacrificial kid trots merrily to the slaughter, nibbling gratefully at the grass round the satanic altar as the chopper comes down. She seems to own nothing of herself. Her first palpable victimhood, a drunken rape, she perceives as the opportunity to open the pages of the Debra Chase sex romps diary against such times as they might come in handy. Without an inner life, the cipher doesn't know the winds blow exceeding cold from an opportunistic, exploitative, pornographic world, and as the hole in the air expands so does the boredom threshold. It stretches flat and dry like the Gobi desert, into an infinity of DIY stores to be opened in Maidstone and lethal cocktails in night-spots.

What redeems *Bimbo* is something in the quality of her vacuity that suggests a total and positively angelic lack of rancour. Throughout her sad little career she retains an innocent sweetness that fairly tears your heart out. There is also tenderness, mostly emanating from the elderly gent, The Sir as she calls him, who sets her up in the luxury-penthouse-in-Mayfair company-owned property and graces their cliché of a relationship with a real warmth and respect for the little rascal he has hired for himself. You wind up thinking that perhaps optimism isn't a bad thing to be coming away with. Not wise, of course; just enviable.

Let them wear socks

PUNISHING THE POOR
Kay Andrews and John Jacobs
Macmillan £17.95

Robert Page

Defenders of the welfare state have been rather thin on the ground over the past decade. The advent of Thatcherism has witnessed a sizeable growth in the ranks of those who subscribe to "welfare pluralism", with its commitment to diminishing the role of publicly-provided social services. This timely book on poverty and social security neatly encapsulates the danger in this ideological shift.

Andrews and Jacobs chart the way success-

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ive Conservative administrations have undermined the position of our most vulnerable citizens. Part one is devoted to an informative review of the Norman Fowler reforms and the Social Security Act of 1986. It also assesses the impact of post-1979 Conservative policy on various claimant groups: families, young people, retirement pensioners, disabled people and their carers and the unemployed. As the authors point out, the Conservatives have, despite assurances to the contrary, come to regard the poor as little more than passive dependents who need to be weaned off state "handouts". In the case of the "undeserving" (young people or the unemployed) overt measures have pursued this objective. Benefits have been cut, disqualification rules tightened and harassment intensified. Those deemed "deserving" have fared little better. Many pensioners and disabled claimants have faced stagnating or declining levels of real income.

The subtle blend of detail, analysis and outrage contained in this part returns in part two. There the authors direct their attention to the adequacy (or otherwise) of current benefit levels, the administration of the single payments scheme between 1980 and 1988, the initial operation of the Social Fund and the overall efficacy of the social security system. Not surprisingly, there is little to be found in the way of comfort here, given the level of official disdain for the poor. This is best illustrated by the attempts of the former DHSS to limit the number of single payments. Shoes for a young child were refused on the grounds that a suitable alternative was available: three pairs of socks could be worn together as a makeshift "shoe". Bedding for a family was deemed unnecessary because the central heating could be left on all night.

Ministerial reluctance to listen to informed advice or to be held accountable for their actions is a theme that continually surfaces. "A repertoire of devious practices ranging from economy with the truth to downright deceit" is the preferred mode of operation. Such profoundly undemocratic procedures can only work against claimants' interests.

Andrews and Jacobs freely acknowledge that the stigmatising treatment of the poor has not been the sole preserve of Conservative governments. It remains to be seen whether Neil Kinnock will (given the opportunity) fulfil the

Bedding for a family was deemed unnecessary because the central heating could be left on all night

pledge he makes in the foreword "to rebuild our society into a community of equal citizens." Finally, it should be noted that this book would make a suitable parting gift for those ministers who have decided to leave the government in order to spend more time with their own well-heeled families. It would provide them with an excellent opportunity to reflect on the part they have played in blighting the lives of millions of their fellow citizens.

Moments of vision

ECSTATIC ANTIBODIES: RESISTING THE AIDS MYTHOLOGY
Tessa Boffin and Sunil Gupta
Rivers Oram Press £20 and £8.95

Joseph Bristow

In this our condom moment, we need protection from one thing: Health Education Authority advertisements. In the first flurry of panic, they offered an image that could only make sense on the cover of *Scientific American*: a microscope slide of the virus plus heaps of medical text. Then came the icebergs—an awkwardly evasive metaphor, meaning that we would sink like the *Titanic*. Above all, we weren't to "die of ignorance". This is OK, I suppose, if you're screwing in an igloo. Witless as ever, they said Aids was "not a gay disease". Directed against tabloid scapegoating, this slogan was well-meant. It implied, of course, that there *were* homosexual illnesses, as pooh-pushing promiscuous poofters sickened the soaraway *Sun*.

The HEA, at last, tried to raise its consciousness. The recent crop of ads (1988-89) showed sex in human flesh. It was an improvement. But, as Roberta McGrath points out in *Ecstatic Antibodies*, the one with the *Dynasty*-permed woman (immaculate make-up and tempting off-the-shoulder top) reactivates the madonna-whore stereotype. Here attractiveness is infectious. Get to know her too well and your balls drop off. Better, boys, to hate her instead. So safer sex equals misogyny.

Try as they might, HEA ads either go off the sex-hating rails or are stopped in their tracks by the government. Sex-positive pictures of gay men are kept out of the hetero press. Thatcherism gets the jitters with the family, and so we're assured we will be all right, breeding as normal in bed. It's like a re-run of the debates that made sex vile with the Contagious Diseases Acts of the 1860s. Any woman *suspected* of being a prostitute could be chucked into a lock-up hospital. Feminist campaigns followed.

Ecstatic Antibodies tries to do what Josephine Butler and her sisters initiated more than a hundred years ago: provide counter-cultural arguments about sex and disease. The book accompanies an exhibition which opened at the Impressions Gallery, York, this January and has links to Simon Watney's polemic in *Policing Desire*, the best study to date on Aids and the media. Editors Tessa Boffin and Sunil Gupta (both photographers) largely shift Aids away from ads to experimental art. Boffin's lesbian photo-sequence reworks Dürer's emblem of melancholy; Margot Farnham introduces David Ruffell's Munch-like portraits of the despairing Aids patient; Gupta juxtaposes pictures of himself and his white lover next to classical Indian paintings. Risky images combat the risks of sero-positivity. It's mostly thoughtful stuff. But will the HEA learn from it?

The Terrence Higgins Trust, still underfunded and doing better work than most, has just issued a series of ads to follow up their jolly "Safer Sex: Keep It Up" promotion. Yet this new campaign lacks its predecessor's wit. Each one is so arty that Athena could be merchandising it. Most are fashion pics in the *Harper's and Queen* mould. Illuminated medieval letters suggest that rubbers are tasteful only for those who look good enough to have sex. These posters—which do portray lithe lesbians and beautiful Black people—are caught somewhere between the ethos of filofaxing enterprise and a broader vision of caring and sharing. The future, meanwhile, holds endless opportunities for inclusive visuals to help immobilize HIV.

The naked I

COLLECTED POEMS 1937–1971
THE DREAM SONGS
John Berryman
Faber £17.50 each

John Lucas

When Yvor Winters called the great American poet Hart Crane "a saint of the wrong religion", he meant that Crane's readiness to die for his art was both noble and absurd. Reading about John Berryman's life and re-reading his poems you feel that Winters would certainly have admitted him to Crane's company. But then the same holds true for a large number of post-war American poets: Delmore Schwartz, Theodore Roethke, Robert Lowell, Randall Jarrell. All drove themselves to the very extreme in their determination to prove that poetry was "a desperate and terrible kind of dedication, the more desperate and terrible because it's so little appreciated."

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As it happens, those words come from Anthony Hecht, an American poet who is more of a survivor than many of his contemporaries. But Hecht certainly subscribes to a way of thinking about poetry it's impossible to imagine English poets having much truck with. Not for them the open-season scramble for prizes and awards, the endless bickering over esteem, the rivalry, the buddy-friendships.

It can't be denied that private lives become public news in American letters. Fame is the spur, and it doesn't so much prick egos as produce the endlessly re-opening scar tissue of a life. Once John Berryman had decided to be a poet he didn't need to invent or provide "the news that stayed news", as Pound said poetry should be. *He* was the news. The *Dream Songs* are about his love affairs, his alcoholism, his poet friends, his despairs, his prolonged flirtation with death.

"In sleep, of a heart attack, let Henry go.
The end of tennis. The beginning of the dark.
The beginning of the wagon.
It is the onward coming terrifies.
Now at last the effort to make him kill himself has failed."

To find this interesting you have to believe in its sincerity of utterance and, beyond that, in the history of the writer, who may or may not be the same person as "John Berryman".

The name was in fact a matter of choice, given that he was born John Allyn Smith. The poet-to-be took the name of the man his mother married just two-and-a-half months after his father had committed suicide. Berryman's love-hate relationship with his mother feels very much in the mode of Hamlet and Gertrude. Although he doesn't make much of it in his poetry he does make poetry out of feigning madness. Or rather, the persona of his *Dream Songs* is the clown-jester who carries many ills about his heart. In the early, famous and fine "Ball Poem", Berryman says:

"Balls will be lost always, little boy,
And no one buys a ball back...He is learning, well behind his desperate eyes,
The epistemology of loss, how to stand up."

Standing up to loss is one of Berryman's preoccupations. The strategies for standing are various. They include falling over drunk, becoming a professor and an authority on Renaissance literature and, above all, achieving fame as a poet.

This is why "Homage to Mistress Bradstreet" is so important. At its best this long, ambitious poem is a most remarkable work, especially in its ability to bring alive the complex feelings of guilt and achievement pressing in on America's first poet, who lived in a community hostile or indifferent to her work. And yet the enterprise is flawed, because Berryman so insists on the parallels between them that you end up feeling that he writes more about himself:

"I doubt if Simon than this blast, that sea,
Spares from his rigour for your poetry
More. We are on each other's hands
Who care. Both of our worlds unhanded us."

Oh, come on. Berryman's world gave him tenured jobs, money, praise: it made him a celebrity. What "Homage" testifies to is his determination to force the issue of being a poet in a society where poetry is "so little appreciated." The assertions of egoism mesh into the clichés of modernism to provide this heady but dubious image of the poet as the unappeasable spirit of recalcitrance: "drunk and asleep in his boots, and catching tigers in red weather", to adapt Wallace Stevens's formulation.

They also provide the *Dream Songs*. As "Homage" shows, Berryman had already developed the style that would make the songs so inimitable, with its queer syntactic twistings and inversions and the odd, occasionally violent, verbal disjunctions. Once he had begun to write them, everything he wanted to say could get into them. They are his *Don Juan*, with this important exception. Whereas Byron is endlessly interested in the world around him, Berryman is interested in virtually nothing apart from himself and what impacts on that self.

In his helpful introduction to the *Collected Poems* Charles Northbury says that "Some may view Berryman's life as mired in shame and loss, but his poetry rises above a black pathology." Well, maybe; but it's often touch and go. After all, the view of Berryman's life we are forced to adopt is provided by the poet in a way that takes for granted its intrinsic value. *This* is what being a poet is, the *Songs* say. I was the man, I suffered, I was there. But Whitman's "barbaric yawp" is more liberating than Berryman's obsessively self-referential memoirs.

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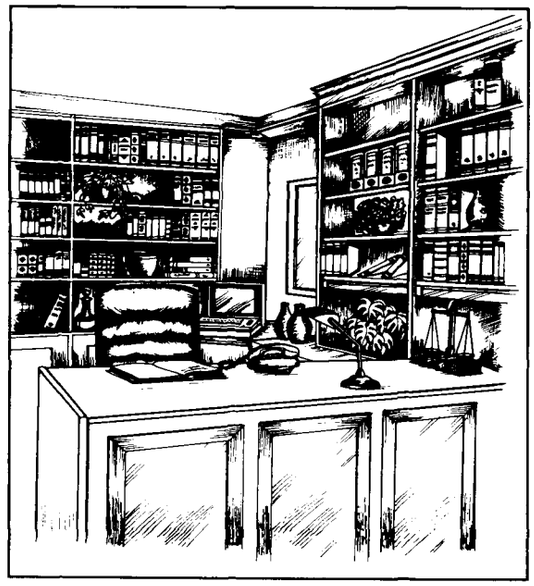

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Eloquent Victorians

POSSESSION
A S Byatt
Chatto & Windus £13.95

Elaine Feinstein

This a poet's novel in several senses, being at once about a brief affair between two 19th-century poets, the fierce passion for poetry, and itself charged throughout with a breathtaking use of language. Byatt can describe the many greys of gardens in the moonlight (she identifies silver pewter and lead) and the dusty heaps of brooches and paperknives in a northern shop window with the same exuberance. That the novel nevertheless has all the page-turning compulsion of a mystery story is a triumph in itself.

The hero, suitably named Roland, is a post-doctoral research student. Working in the London Library on the Victorian poet Ash, he comes upon an interchange of letters between Ash and an unknown woman which excites his normally tepid spirits. He steals the letters. A series of clues lead him to believe the recipient of Ash's affections might be Christabel Lamotte, a Victorian poet of much interest these days to feminist critics, and his quest for information about Lamotte leads him to the beautiful scholar Dr Maud Bailey. Together Roland and Dr Bailey unearth letters which establish the details of an intense and hitherto unsuspected relationship between these poets, and form one of their own.

Both Victorian poets are invented very successfully, but it is the characterisation of Christabel Lamotte that is central. Lamotte's passion for the making of poems gives her the ability to live a withdrawn life which rewards her with a freedom women in the 20th century hardly recognise. She and her companion would inevitably these days have been mistaken for Lesbian. Indeed, we never do discover the full nature of her relationship with poor Blanche Glover, who is driven to suicide when Lamotte departs with Ash.

But it is Byatt's creation of Lamotte's poetry which is quite remarkable, in a way that the word pastiche does not convey. Certainly, Lamotte is given themes that recall Christina Rosetti and some of the syntax of Emily Dickinson, but the lovely poem about spinster aunts who "sorted—cleaned—and ordered/What lay in feckless heap" is decidely more than that. It is almost as if Byatt had taken on the persona of a felt 19th-century counterpart in order to write poems of her own.

The other 19th-century figure, Ash, has all the concerns of his time: religious doubt, Darwin, world mythologies and so forth. Byatt makes him an enchanting letter writer, and gives his poems an admirably vigorous Browningesque quality. It is not Ash and Lamotte's love affair, but the intellectual intimacy in the letters between them which arrouses our envy.

There are many other contemporary academic figures in the book, some of whom might inhabit a David Lodge novel: Mortimer Cropper, with his American chequebook and horridly precise notion of everyone's financial expectations; Professor James Blackadder, his frustrated English counterpart, who turns out kindlier than seemed likely; Dr Nest, steered into working on Ash's wife Ellen because she is a woman herself; and a bouncy bisexual American, Leonora Stern, who is inclined to read the landscapes in her texts as if they were human orifices.

It is on Maud Bailey, however, that the wish for freedom Lamotte so beautifully articulates in her reading of the Mermaid fairy story is focussed. Maud finds herself much drawn to Roland, who at that stage of the novel looks totally unemployed. It is not an easy situation for a dedicated scholar, as Maud observes: "If he went out of the room it would be grey and empty. If he did not go out of it, how could she concentrate?"

This ambitious novel goes part way to questioning the centrality of sexuality in our time, and makes some claim for the passionate intensities of work and retreat which the Victorians found so much more acceptable than we do. Nevertheless, there is an ending altogether suitable to a novel subtitled *A Romance*, and an exquisite floral postscript. I doubt if we shall see a bolder novel this year.

Beauty of the beasts

BUFFALO GALS
Ursula Le Guin
Gollancz £13.95

Rebecca O'Rourke

All too often, collections of shorter pieces by novelists turn out to be a great mistake. Like children's pastry shapes baked alongside the apple pie, they draw praise for the effort rather than the achievement. How was Buffalo Gals—worryingly subtitled "animal presences"—going to turn out? Trick or Treat?

Definitely more treat than trick, although there were moments when it threatened otherwise. Those animal presences sometimes pull the writing off into sentimental thinking expressed in writing too solemn for its theme. This happens rarely though, and it's more than compensated for by the abundance of writing that explores the fit and fumble of animal/human interaction in original, moving and sometimes funny ways.

In "Mazes" a caged creature, infinitely more gracious and intelligent than its captor, contemplates imminent death filled with puzzled pity for the creature on the other side of the mesh. Required reading for all psychology students, and for all of us who hold up hoops for others to jump through. Here, as elsewhere in the collection, the animal presences work most powerfully when they speak to and challenge our behaviour within human society. Le Guin's characteristic themes of ecological balance and the sentience of the universe, and her abiding interest in how humanity deals with difference, are well represented here.

"Vaster Than Empires and More Slow" plays a wonderful trick on its protagonists, and readers, when a hostile animal presence is picked up during the exploration of a planet assumed to be inhabited only by trees and plants. The explorers' fear grows, becomes tangible and damaging until they can identify its source. All it takes is that small shift in perception to see themselves as more than observers of the world.

Required reading for all of us who hold up hoops for others to jump through. Here, as elsewhere, the animal presences work most powerfully when they challenge our behaviour within human society

This same willingness to be a part, rather than apart, makes "May's Lion" the most moving story in the collection. It is described as a stage on the way to that epic anthropology of a science fiction novel, *Always Coming Home*. There Ursula Le Guin invented language, history and culture for her new world in scholarly detail and then set herself the task of both creating and discovering it. Doing so, she rearranges the usual relationship between fiction and imagination, which conceals the connections and borrowings. Instead, she makes them absolutely explicit, working up fiction's ability to heal through its power of making things different while still retaining the integrity of the original situation.

A sick mountain lion comes down into an old woman's yard. Cautiously, she gives it water and sits within sight of it as it lies blocking her path to the field. When milking time comes, May calls her friend for advice. Nobody knows what to do and eventually the police come and shoot it. Ursula Le Guin writes this story first but then adds another version, in which the possibility of someone shooting the lion is anticipated and therefore avoided.

The rolling introduction offers an innovative approach to the organisation of the various pieces. Each of the 11 sections, nearly half of them poetry, are introduced as they would be were the work read aloud. It works well, sometimes making things clearer, as with "Mazes" and "The Wife's Story"; at other times, as with "Schrodinger's Cat", demonstrating that in the end the story counts. The introduction is barely comprehensible, but the story a delight: a real cat appears to startling effect in the realms of hypothetical quantum physics.

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Still fighting

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY
Angela Y Davis
The Women's Press £6.95
WOMEN, CULTURE AND POLITICS
Angela Y Davis
The Women's Press £5.95

Toks Williams

In her re-issued *Autobiography*, Angela Davis recounts her involvement with the Black Liberation Movement of the 1960s, her membership of the Communist Party, her imprisonment and eventual release with a dedication to the cause as totally devoid of self-pity and racial hatred as that of Nelson Mandela. The cause was—and remains—the full participation of black people in American life in order that they could be said to be truly emancipated. Neither Angela Davis nor Nelson Mandela allowed imprisonment to embitter them and thus distract them from their goal. In solitary confinement, she writes that "In that state of almost continuous solitude, getting involved in my work was a fundamental condition of survival and sanity."

What is the legacy of the Black Liberation Movement of the 1960s, and what role is one of its major activists playing now that the momentum of those heady days has slowed down? In *Women Culture and Politics*, Angela Davis demonstrates that the same issues are still very much alive despite their apparent depoliticisation in recent years.

It is depressing to read, 16 years after her ordeal at the hands of the then Governor of California, that President Reagan's was the most racist of recent administrations, "persistently seeking to dismantle 30 years of gain by civil rights movements". During his presidency, "our communities became increasingly impoverished," through a policy "designed to deny the existence of institutionalised racism" and assert "that black people are suffering because of our own inadequacies".

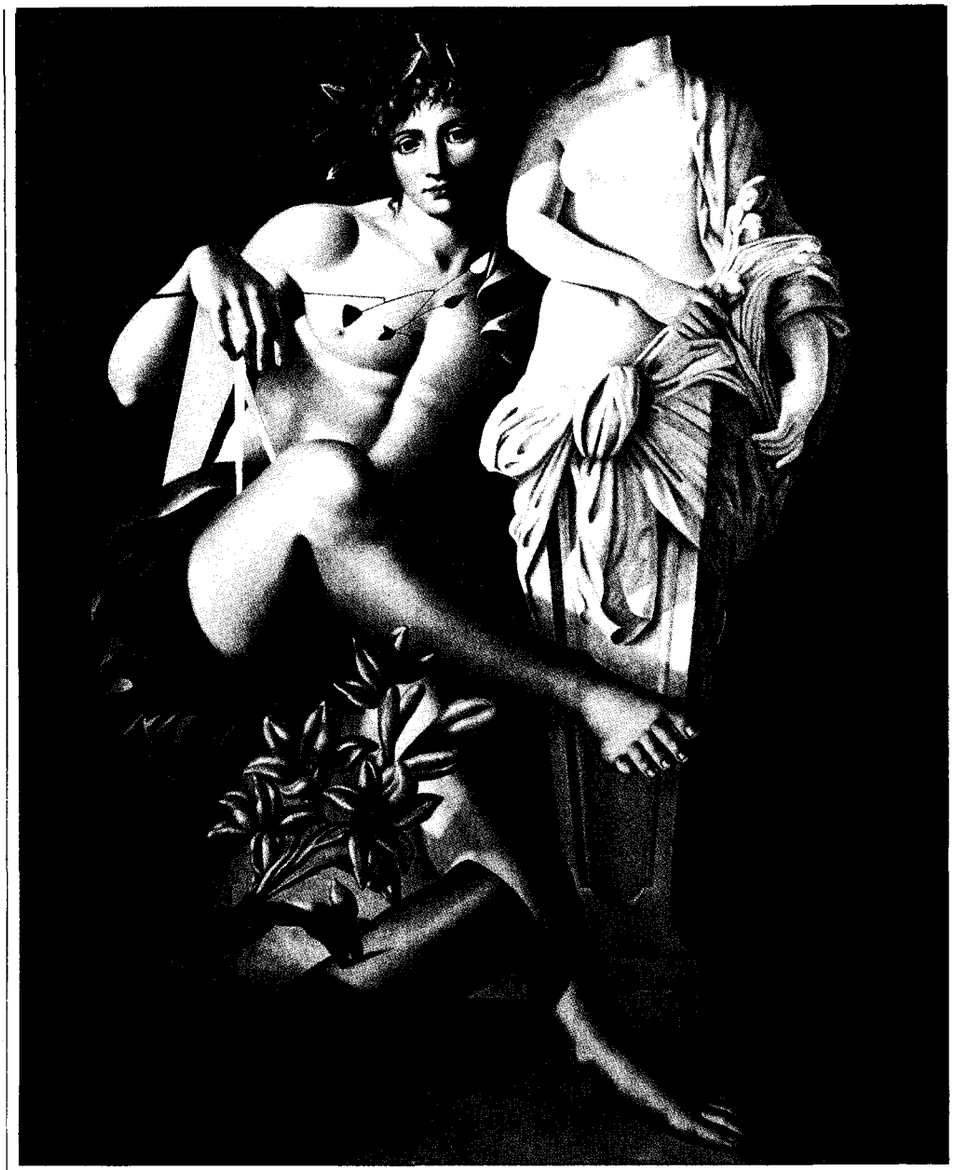
More heartening are the positive achievements of grassroots activism. Jesse Jackson's political campaign "confirmed and further nurtured progressive thought...among the people of our country." More progressive black people were elected to political office than ever before. In 1987 a campaign succeeded in blocking President Reagan's nomination of the "ultraconservative" Robert Bork to the Supreme Court.

Activists also won increased educational opportunities for blacks. Sadly, although by 1977 "college" attendance rate was about the same for black students as for whites, five years later white youth were 45 per cent more likely to attend college. Davis exhorts black graduates at UCLA in 1985 to "throw seed for future battles," even as they "reap the fruits of past struggles". Surely the overwhelming achievement of the civil rights movement, and the test of its endurance, have been the changes that are still being fought through.

Although in 1974 Davis depicts herself as "vehemently opposed to the notion developed within the young women's liberation movement, which...equated things personal with things political," she now regrets that she was unable then to show a greater understanding "of the dialectics of the personal and the political." But even in the late 1960s she was already well in the vanguard of the women's movement, as she demonstrates in a letter to George Jackson: "Women's Liberation in the revolution is inseparable from the liberation of the male."

She participated in many international causes. Her examination of the plight of Egyptian women best draws together the three themes in the title of the second book. She describes the cultural and class arguments for and against the wearing of the *chador*, and how President Sadat's "open door" policy appears to have engendered rising unemployment and more poverty. The veil is "in its contemporary expression, a direct result of prevailing socio-economic conditions in Egypt." She concludes that "Because women's destiny is tied to the larger political situation, they certainly have a stake in the development of a strong political opposition."

The publication of these two books is timely, for there is a resurgent interest in the civil rights movement among young black people. The seemingly fallow Reagan years can perhaps be seen as a gestation period for the activists of tomorrow, just as the years after the activities of black leaders like Marcus Garvey in the 1930s and 1940s were for the events of the 1960s. Certainly, Angela Davis's single-minded dedication and hard-headed idealism provide more than enough positive encouragement for those who may think there is little left to fight for in the civil rights movement.



Carlo Maria Mariani's "April" is a pastiche of a pastiche, argues Edward Lucie-Smith in "Art in the Eighties" (Phaidon Press, £19.95 and £14.95). Mariani's work "subtly exaggerates the characteristics which divide the neo-classical version or copy from the truly classical orginal". In addition to postmodernism, Lucie-Smith's end-of-the-decade round-up covers "the new spirit in painting" in its English, Scottish, German and Italian manifestations, as well as photography and "graffiti art" and its offshoots in America.

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Elliott Erwitt's 1988 portrait of Magnum photographers: "They know they're like wise monkeys, witnesses who, in some baffling way, aren't telling"

See no evil

Magnum photographers lose their potency at the Hayward, argues Marina Warner

In the group photograph of the Magnum agency's members, taken by Elliott Erwitt in 1988, most of the famous photographers are covering their faces. Some peep through their fingers, others can be seen smiling behind their hands, one is putting out his tongue: it's a larky family snap. But generally speaking, its subjects are making the gesture of refusal people make when they are unaccustomed to being snapped and fear it.

These men and women know more about the business of making pictures than most. The photographers of Magnum, founded in 1947 by Henri Cartier-Bresson and Robert Capa with some others, have chronicled the world in convulsion since then, and produced images that in many cases have crystallised the way certain crises and conflicts, summit meetings and leaders are remembered. The members of the agency retain control of their own material, including negatives, and they also aim to direct the uses to which it's put: none of them does advertising work, though some undertake the lucrative business of annual company reports.

Magnum has meant integrity and courage since its founding, and, like a fellowship of saints, it also has its martyrs—Robert Capa was killed in Vietnam. So why do they hide their faces in the group portrait? What is it they know about their practice?

In the majority of the 250-odd images on show at the Hayward Gallery **In Our Time: The world as seen by Magnum photographers**, (till 8 May), the photographer does not admit being present; only in a portrait like Martine Franck's, of an old woman in a bare hospital in Italy, does the subject look back and, with the mimicry of a child, encircle her eye with finger and thumb in response to Franck's camera. One principle of a Magnum picture is no eye contact: the photographer operates unseen. His or her physical position is often indecipherable too: in order to shoot the powerful, Ran-like horizontal of a violent protest in Japan against a new airport, Bruno Barbey must have been on a balcony or a crane, but we can't quite tell; to catch the grim, resisting crowd in Prague in 1968, Koudelka must have been perched on the tank itself. But it's hard to work out where Capa was when he took another historic picture, facing the crowds at the liberation of Paris in a hemispherical sweep all around him in the packed street. In all cases the photographer doesn't take part in the scene, or do as others are doing.

So another reason they cover their faces in their group portrait could be that the Magnum signature requires that the image-makers be there, in the right place, at the right time (Cartier-Bresson's "decisive moment"), but that nobody should see them at it— or that, at least in the testimony they leave behind, they should dematerialise, like Macavity. Robert Capa took his famous name as a kind of *nom de guerre* (he was born Andre Friedmann) when he was shooting in the Spanish civil war: in Spanish, "capa" means cloak, or disguise. It suited this archetypal figure of the war photographer as hero, with his Valentino looks, his daring, his womanising, his champagne. He was an undercover man. And it also reveals a tradi-

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tion within Magnum of associating documentary reportage with daredevilry, machismo, and a certain streak of Don Juanism with the images themselves (wanting more of them, harder, faster, riskier, and in every port).

One aspect of Magnum's enterprise continues Capa's war record. Later members, like Philip Jones-Griffiths working in Vietnam (unaccountably absent from the Hayward), James Nachtwey covering the wars in the Middle East and Central America, and Susan Meiselas reporting on the horrors of Nicaragua, use the camera to campaign against wrongs by confronting them head on, by looking Mister Death in the face and showing us what he's got. *Picture Post*, in the 1930s, used two spreads of Capa pictures from Spain with the banner headline "This is War". But the message is not so simple, as George Rodger, one of the founder members of Magnum, realised when he went to Belsen on the liberation of Germany, photographed the dead, and decided never to make images of war again.

Rodger faced the bitter truths about photographs' beauty on the one hand and receivers' appetites for strong stimuli on the other; and went to work in Africa instead, to concentrate on living people. Susan Meiselas, from a different angle, also admits defeat. In the excellent concluding essay of the catalogue, Fred Ritchin quotes her saying in 1987, "The large sense of an 'image' has been defined elsewhere—in Washington, and in the press, by the powers that be. I can't, we can't somehow reframe it..." Her shot of a body, from which the top half and the head are missing, with the vertebrae laid bare, lying beside an abandoned gun on the brow of a hill, is captioned at the Hayward "Site of assassinations by the National Guard". But this leaves me not knowing anything. The image shows the pity of war, this corpse may be the enemy you killed, my friend. But I still don't know what happened, and the photograph doesn't take sides beyond its statement about casualties of war. So the photographers are maybe hiding their faces because they know they're like wise monkeys, seeing no evil, hearing no evil, and speaking no evil: they are witnesses who at the same time, in some baffling way, aren't telling.

"Daredevilry, machismo, and a certain streak of Don Juanism with the images themselves"

Left: Josef Koudelka, "Prague 1968"; below Michael Nichols, "Komodo dragon, Indonesia 1985"; and below left Martine Franck, "Old age home, France 1975"

But when an image went into circulation—say Nachtwey's picture of an Israeli soldier lying dead in a pool of blood in Bethlehem—and was distributed in the photojournals, the accompanying words would have had a point of view. The Hayward show divorces all the images from their place of distribution and from the context and argument in which they were once

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embedded. Some photographers survive this treatment with an unambiguous message: Ian Berry's study of a youth playing a guitar made from an oil can as he stands in the ruins of a dwelling in South Africa speaks volumes; Bruce Davidson has continued his powerful 1960s studies of Harlem with a colour photograph of a graffiti-scribbled subway car, dawn through the glass, and the commuters' heads drooping in morning exhaustion. The wits, like Elliott Erwitt and Burk Uzzle, remain pointed; Cartier-Bresson's sense of the revealing gesture still makes him stand out from the rest. But most of the time the reports from the front line of history become dandified and aestheticised by such splitting from their site of reproduction. The show makes the images shed their relation to time and experience and fills them instead with arty ironies and spurious enigmas.

Some of the comparative newcomers to Magnum have left the scene of the action to attend to the mundane and the personal, like Eugene Richards with his studies of illness, and Peter Marlow with his acute comments on contemporary Britain; others have started admitting they are making disturbing images for art's sake, like Michael Nichols with his weird flash photo of a Komodo dragon in Indonesia.

The hang of the selection does not, however, make it easy to trace such altered concerns among the photographers. It doesn't follow a chronological development in history or individuals' work, and by mixing topics promiscuously it compounds the dangers of sensationalism and emptiness.

The show ends by hiding Magnum's own face behind a bravura parade of masterpieces. While the agency proudly specialises in the exposé, the uncomfortable truth, and unflinching gaze, it cannot, on the evidence of this exhibition, take a look at itself and shoot its own history, with the searching honesty it raised to a creed in documentary photography.

Shopping center, Washington DC/Burk Uzzle

Kathleen Turner and Michael Douglas: 17 years of wedded bliss turn into a domestic horror story

Film

Fag ends

Suzanne Moore sees the dark side of the Californian dream

Whoever it was who said that it was their ambition to die without ever having been to California has my deepest sympathy. For these days you don't even have to get on a plane to get a dose of sickly Californian imperialism. You just need to go to the movies and you are in a strange land where everyone emotes endlessly, the sun always shines, no one smokes and the language is a peculiar kind of therapy-speak. This world is peopled by *individuals* who believe that the root of all evil is simply that we don't know how to "relate" to each other. The goal of these saccharine-coated characters is to "come to terms" with everything it is impossible to come to terms with, like sex, death or growing up.

So in this sanitised, anti-smoking atmosphere of user-friendly smiles, it is a pleasure to see two films which blow smoke in the face of clean living. The first looks as if it was sponsored by the tobacco industry and the other examines the fag end of a marriage.

The Fabulous Baker Boys stars Jeff Bridges as Jack Baker, a man who has "had a cigarette in his mouth for five years." He and his older brother Frank, played by real-life sibling Beau Bridges, are the fabulous Baker boys: a low-key cocktail lounge act whose dire repertoire includes the dreadful song "Feelings" as well as a lot of schmaltzy patter. Early on in the film, written and directed by Steve Kloves, Jack is established as the epitome of cool: ie, besides chain-smoking, he fucks waitresses and doesn't really talk to anyone except children (the little girl upstairs) and animals (his dog).

His brother holds the whole thing together with the help of spray-on hair and smarmy small talk. He has to for the sake of his wife and kids, but even he realises, "Things have changed. Two pianos aren't enough any more." So they recruit a singer and end up with ex-call girl Susie (Michelle Pfeiffer), whose breathy renditions and horrible outfits go down a storm with audiences. Predictably enough she falls for Mr Cool who, surprise, surprise, actually wants to be a black jazz pianist.

But the centre of the film is not so much this affair but the relationship between the two brothers. This is played out beautifully, as is the portrait of life on the road, so that despite the clichés (strong, silent type meets tart with heart of gold), this is a film that is consistently watchable. But Pfeiffer—touted as the new sex-goddess— wiggles so obviously on the top of a piano that it makes you long for the likes of Bette Davis who could suggest more by smoking a cigarette than any amount of bump'n'grind. The days when screen idols had a cigarette *instead* of having sex rather than *after* having sex are long gone. In the era of New Prohibition no one has either any more, they're too busy air-brushing those unhealthy urges and flossing

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their feelings to meet the exacting standards of moral hygiene currently required by Hollywood.

At least some of the baser emotions are allowed to emerge in Danny DeVito's **The War of the Roses**. DeVito, better known as an actor, showed considerable flair for directing black comedy in *Throw Momma from the Train* and here he brings together his old pals Michael Douglas and Kathleen Turner in a film which looks at that increasingly popular activity, divorce.

They star as Oliver and Barbara Rose, a couple who on the surface of it have everything: success, kids and a beautiful home. But after 17 years of wedded bliss, Barbara realises what she hasn't got—an identity beyond being Oliver's wife. She asks for a divorce and Oliver is stunned, though the tell-tale signs have been there for a while.

Oliver cannot understand why she wants to end the marriage after all he has given her. But she cannot put a name to the problem ("I can't give you specifics"). All she wants is the house, which is the one thing Oliver won't concede, so full-scale war breaks out between them. The house and its contents symbolise their different investments. Oliver believes that it should be his, as he has paid for everything in it. Barbara believes it should be hers because she has chosen and maintained all their precious possessions. Their home is the fruit of her invisible labour and she won't part with it.

The result is a domestic horror film which echoes many of the 1940s "battle of the sexes" films. Only instead of poisonous repartee, the Roses actually slug it out physically with both partners going to extraordinary lengths to make each other leave. They kill each other's pets, he pisses on her gourmet food, she drives over his car.

This is domestic violence of a highly unusual kind, because Barbara with her background as a gymnast is more than able to meet every physical challenge. However nasty things get, this is still comedy and not real life, so he doesn't beat the shit out of her and instead admires the lengths to which she will go to destroy him. The laughs are always double-edged, deriving from a fantasy of equality (she is as strong as he is), and a sense of unease that she might not be.

Yet the most striking aspect of this modern morality tale is the house itself. It starts off as a perfect expression of a coveted lifestyle and ends up literally as a prison—the Roses have barricaded themselves in. It metamorphoses during the course of the movie from a light and spacious dream home to a strangely threatening and unfamiliar place full of dark nooks and crannies.

Turner once more proves her abilities as a comic actress, but we rarely get more than a glimpse of what has driven her character this far. Like the work she has put into the house, the source of her anger remains hidden. The film never allows her to reply to the question that DeVito, the cynical narrator of the film, says that men ask all women eventually: "What the hell is wrong with you?" But then rhetorical questions are always the most difficult to answer.

Music

The rhythms of exile

Mark Sinker meets South African jazz player Brian Abrahams

"In Africa people used to walk a lot and all music had the form of walking, marching, running. All music had the rhythm of life itself... The form of music that I have chosen to play deals with those very basic rhythmic patterns: walking rhythms, trotting rhythms, climbing-a-hill kinds of rhythms."

For Brian Abrahams, jazz drummer and band leader, the force of his own heritage didn't dawn on him until he had been living in exile in Britain for two years. In 1977 he was watching fellow South African exiles Chris McGregor and Louis Moholo leading group sets at London's The 100 Club when something clicked: "I had never seen anything like it. That was a turning point. I thought, I'm a South African. I'm going to have to reach the understanding that I'm proud of who I am, of where I come from."

Articulate, gentle-voiced and deeply serious about his music, Abrahams was born in 1947 into a community of great diversity. Apartheid, it is sometimes said, reached Cape Town later than anywhere else. Traditional South African folk and pop forms could be heard every day on the streets, mixed in with brass bands, marching bands, Gospel choirs, Cape Malay choirs: a multi-ethnic culture that had been brewing since the Dutch settled in the 16th century. Cape Town was a port on the trade route to the Far East; it had gathered displaced peoples from the Java islands, Malaysia, Madagascar and all up and down the east and west coasts of Africa, with each exiled group keeping a grip on its tragic history through its music.

By the late 1950s, classical and big band music could be heard on the radio, and every kind of jazz record could be bought from the sailors in the docks. Modern urban pop—*kwela* and later *mbaqanga*—was beginning to develop; Cape jazz musicians, who were often directly involved in the new scene, wanted to push it to another level. In parallel with the increased politicisation of jazz in the US, players like Gideon Nxumalo, Mackay Davashe and Kippie Moeketsi aimed for a uniquely South African jazz which would transcend the licence of dockside lowlife and respond seriously, passionately and pridefully to the values and the freedoms of the street music all around.

Tragically, by the mid-1960s this dream of Moeketsi's had died. Violence, inculcated by apartheid, had soured the huge 1963 Cold Castle Jazz Festival; the social conditions for an independent serious jazz community simply didn't exist; the cream of the younger generation—Abdullah Ibrahim (then known as Dollar Brand) and Chris McGregor's Blue Notes (which included Moholo, Dudu Pukwana, Mongezi Feza and Johnny Dyani)—left for Europe.

Abrahams, just back from a rare visit to South Africa, describes a situation which has not changed much. He underlines the problems those earlier musicians faced. Unlike young black British players such as Courtney Pine and Steve Williamson, upcoming players in South Africa rarely get the opportunity to play at anything other than Saturday night parties, where they will be paid in kind with food and drink. Such limited career opportunities, he says, "do not inspire anyone to spend eight hours a day on their sax practice", developing their own musical identity.

Arriving in the midst of a wave of experimental European jazz, the South African exiles introduced an emotional intensity and a wild structural daring which completely altered its direction. By the time Abrahams arrived in 1975, they were close to living legends. Certainly still on the margins, but with the enthusiastic welcome of many European players, they had pushed out the further edges of the avant garde and laid down a groundwork that is only now being acknowledged in the work of UK groups like Loose Tubes.

Under apartheid, South African pop's resilience and wiry richness has always been a form of resistance, encoding history into the rhythms of the everyday. But South African jazz, though

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far less widely attended to, carries more of a challenge. Abrahams's own multi-ethnic group **District Six**—who will play at next week's Camden Jazz Festival—was formed after his 100 Club revelation. It is a quieter affair than the groups formed by the earlier wave of exiles, dealing with emotions through rhythmic simplicity and colour. But it highlights—as South African jazz has always done—the explosive potential of cultural mix, the intuitive force of improvisation, and the extraordinary future that is finally beginning to open up for South African music.

"The music that I play is always changing," says Abrahams. "It's very uncanny to realise that sometimes you compose some music that comes to you, and you start playing it with the band, and you're not quite sure what the significance of it all is. And you find that in later years, all of a sudden, something happens that makes the piece of music totally relevant. So it's like having a foresight."

"When the Blue Notes arrived in England, they were certainly something more than just music—there was this ferocious pride in saying that we also are relevant. They had a very special, high energetic form of presentation, and it was very spiritual as well, very deep founded. You could hear the rumbling of the hills, the troubled minds of people, the lament in the way of life in South Africa, because of the difficulties people encounter. It said that we did not need to be westernised, we did not need to be American in our music, we didn't have to be anything. We could only be ourselves. Be South African, and present our form of progressive music."

Brian Abrahams and District Six will be playing on 18 March at the Town & Country Club and on 24 March at the Shaw Theatre, in the Jazz Against Apartheid Extravaganza.

Television

Getting to know Uncle Joe

Robert Carver appreciates a documentary life of Stalin

The camera tracks fast down a narrow official corridor, a huge oak door opens inwards—and suddenly in front of you in close-up is Stalin, eyes aglint, puffing his pipe as he swivels round in slow motion to look you in the eye.

This chilling and dramatic sequence opens Thames TV's three-hour, three-part *magnum opus*, **Stalin** (ITV 10.35pm Tuesdays). It's a monumental series, a blend of documentary footage and interviews with experts and surviving witnesses, a comprehensive study of one of the most difficult, complex and contentious issues in modern history.

The programme has been more than a year in the making. As filming progressed, the Gorbachev line became resolutely anti-Stalin and co-operation improved. For the first time ever, a western camera team has been allowed to film the now abandoned labour camps in the Arctic Circle; for the first time the KGB archives have released footage of famine victims in the Ukraine and the mass graves of the Terror.

It is remarkable to have a British television crew filming excavations now going on of the killing fields in Kurapaty forest, near Minsk in Byelorussia. There, between 1937 and 1941, 100,000 peasants were shot and buried by the KGB's predecessors, the NKVD. As he sifts through the mounds of bones in the mass graves, a Soviet archaeologist explains: "The pits would each take about 240 bodies in summer, but in winter only 160 because of the thick clothing."

It is grim, ghastly film-making this, but gripping nonetheless. The freshness and originality of the archive material take your breath away at times, not least those old—but newly dug out—grainy black and white newsreel images. Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky and Bukharin age, die and are buried in front of your eyes.

But grim ironies abound. At the 12th party congress in 1923 we see Trotsky in full rhetorical flood; then the camera slowly pans to disclose a broadly smiling Stalin applauding his deadly rival. Later, in his Mexican exile, an older Trotsky talks straight to camera, denouncing Stalin and all his works—in English, for the benefit of an American newsreel.

Most of the people who could really blow the gaff on the unresolved mysteries of Stalin's career are long dead, but some extraordinary witnesses are brought forward. Frail, wizened, but still upright and proud in his incongrously modern suit is Stalin's bodyguard, challenging the story that Stalin never visited the grave of his wife, Nadezdha, who apparently shot herself in 1932. "I used to drive him there from the Kremlin at the dead of night, and wait there while he would sit by the grave, silent, for hours, smoking pipe after pipe."

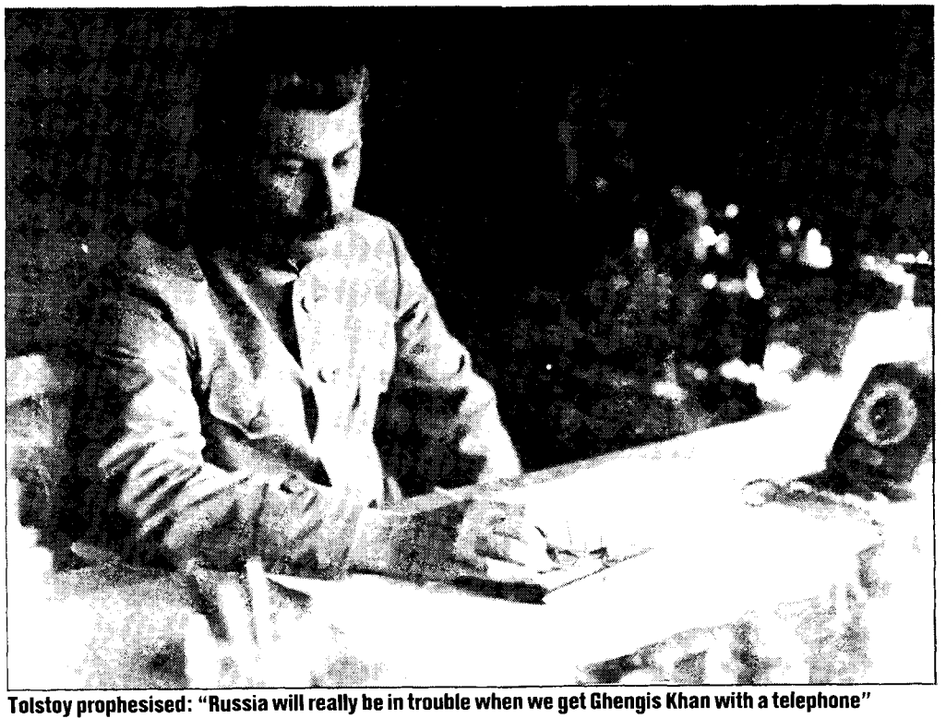
There is Stalin's daughter Svetlana, with carefully tinted hair and watery blue eyes, quoting her mother on the dictator's ruthlessness and cruelty: "Well, he is an Asiatic—what do you expect?"

As for the experts, there is American money in this series, and it is debatable whether the overwhelming predominance of American academics interviewed reflects the state of Soviet studies or a more cynical appeal to future US audiences.

But what is almost entirely missing from these films is an exploration of the debate between Stalin's policy of socialism in one country and Trotsky's internationalist and revolutionary strategy based on the old Comintern.

Missing too is much real feeling of how Stalin is still regarded as a folk hero by many ordinary Soviet citizens. This series is a sophisticated western evaluation of Stalin, which is fair enough, but we might have been given more of those Russians who think "the Boss" was quite right to send all those kulaks, Jews and intellectuals to the camps.

Nevertheless, this *Stalin* looks as if it will be the definitive television version; it manages to be lucid and easy to follow without being patronising or simplistic. The Soviet co-producer Vladmimir Savitski was in London for the preview and I asked him through an interpreter if the series would be screened on Russian television uncut. "I will try my utmost to make sure this happens," he replied, "but the decision will be taken at the very highest levels."



Tolstoy prophesised: "Russia will really be in trouble when we get Ghengis Khan with a telephone"

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Superwomen

No time to stuff a mushroom

Sara Maitland reads the latest instalment from Shirley Conran

As far as I'm concerned, Superwoman is a rather cute (and totally preposterous) American comic strip character who has developed into a TV series. In tricky moments she whips behind a tree, whirls around briskly and emerges wearing a sort of US cheerleader costume (now that *is* power-dressing). She is fabulous in both senses of the word, an amalgam of Wonderwoman and Supergirl. Far from needing to be "downed with", she needs to be up-graded and given plots and budgets as great as her brother heroes.

This week, however, sees the return of another version of Superwoman. Shirley Conran's equally mythical but infinitely less attractive version is back, 60 per cent fatter than 15 years ago (**Down with Superwoman**, Sidgwick & Jackson, £14.95). Now there are 500 pages of advice you'll never need, and I think ought not to want. This Superwoman is very peculiar. Her motto is: "Life is too short to stuff a mushroom," but she carries a toothbrush for cleaning upholstery piping!

I was so startled by this extraordinary suggestion that I actually rang and asked my mother—a full-time, old-fashioned, *excellent* housewife with a large, clean, comfy house—what she did about cleaning upholstery piping. First she said "What?" then she said "Nothing." Of course this may be a family weakness, or inherited deficiency (seriously, does anyone out there have a special implement for cleaning upholstery piping?), but from our two different perspectives on housework, we agreed that at least stuffed mushrooms might please one's friends.

Ah, but Superwoman is not interested in friends—one woman is praised for *never inviting anyone* to her house (so why the worry about upholstery piping?) As far as I can see, Superwoman is interested mostly in herself, and she seems a pretty boring self. She gardens, for instance, only for personal therapy—six references in the index and none of them mentioning beauty or pleasure.

Of course people, including women, need certain skills (and it would be impossible to read everything in this book—from how to buy a washing machine to stress management—without learning *something* useful), but this sort of general volume cannot really teach those skills. It is about an ethos: and it is neither an ethos of love, nor an ethos of joy. The sub-title of the book recommends it "for everyone who hates housework", but nowhere does it say: "Step over the mess your kids have made, *because they are having more fun making it than you will have clearing it up.*"

As far as I can see Superwoman is interested mostly in herself, and she seems a pretty boring self

Almost all the people I know run their household, and the other practical aspects of their life, as well as they need to. They acquired the skills somewhere along the way (from Mummy? soap operas? canny observation? Life the Great Teacher? grim necessity?). They have found their own toleration level—which may involve ironing their five year old's knickers and may not involve ever brushing their teeth.

When this goes wildly wrong for me, and it does, it is not because I don't have the skills; it is for emotional and social reasons which will not be sorted out by Thatcherite instructions to pull myself together, get organised, make a list and stock the deep-freeze. As a means of addressing the conflicts and delights of being a middle-class late 20th century modern European woman, this book is worse than useless.

Actually I have just realised that there are three categories of human being for whom this book would be genuinely useful: i) an intelligent adolescent looking for ammunition to prove the inefficiency and uselessness of its carer parent ii) people brought up as slave-owning aristocrats who have just been deprived by revolution of their life-long habits of servants and who urgently need to start from scratch (this probably includes many British males) iii) women who have wasted an entire day moaning about their inefficiency, laziness and uselessness.

They can put their feet up, read this book and realise that they don't want to be Superwoman—clean, clever, rich, fit and well-groomed, she isn't really very nice. They'll feel better off as they are.

Damon Burnard

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Performance

Olympic play

Louise Gray jumps and freezes in the name of art

For a performance that combines the twin themes of innocence and possession, director Graeme Miller uses an unusual starting point for **A Girl Skipping**. "In play," wrote the Dutch historian Johan Huizinga in *Homo Ludens*, "the beauty of the human body in motion reaches its zenith, and in its more developed forms, it is saturated with rhythm and harmony." Although adults play too, Miller is aware that their play has become subverted: there is no aim to it. For him, this amounts to a loss of innocence. Through frenzied games, *Skipping* aims to restore to play the chance of a dervish-like purity. At a time when much British performance seeks to compound its meaninglessness with further meaninglessness, Miller has created a sculpture of a piece in thought, sound and deed, the end result being one of catharsis.

Over the last decade, Miller's work with Impact Theatre, and more recently with ad hoc companies, has been at the forefront of establishing a valuable and much needed tradition for performance. For *Skipping*, Miller's five-strong company spent three weeks in intensive play with one another. They became, in his own words, "an Olympic play team." As a result, *Skipping* veers between aleatory and highly choreographed set pieces, culminating in the whole company double-dutch skipping. The action of skipping assumes a zen-like dimension, with the performers inside the game surrendering to the rhythm of the ropes. This action is played out on a school playground reconstructed in the theatre, complete with whitewashed sports markings.

Miller's music, part pre-recorded, part live violins and vocals, is as integral as the image of skipping ropes. Written for a series of mantric, repeating sounds, the music forms a rhythmical grid over the performance.

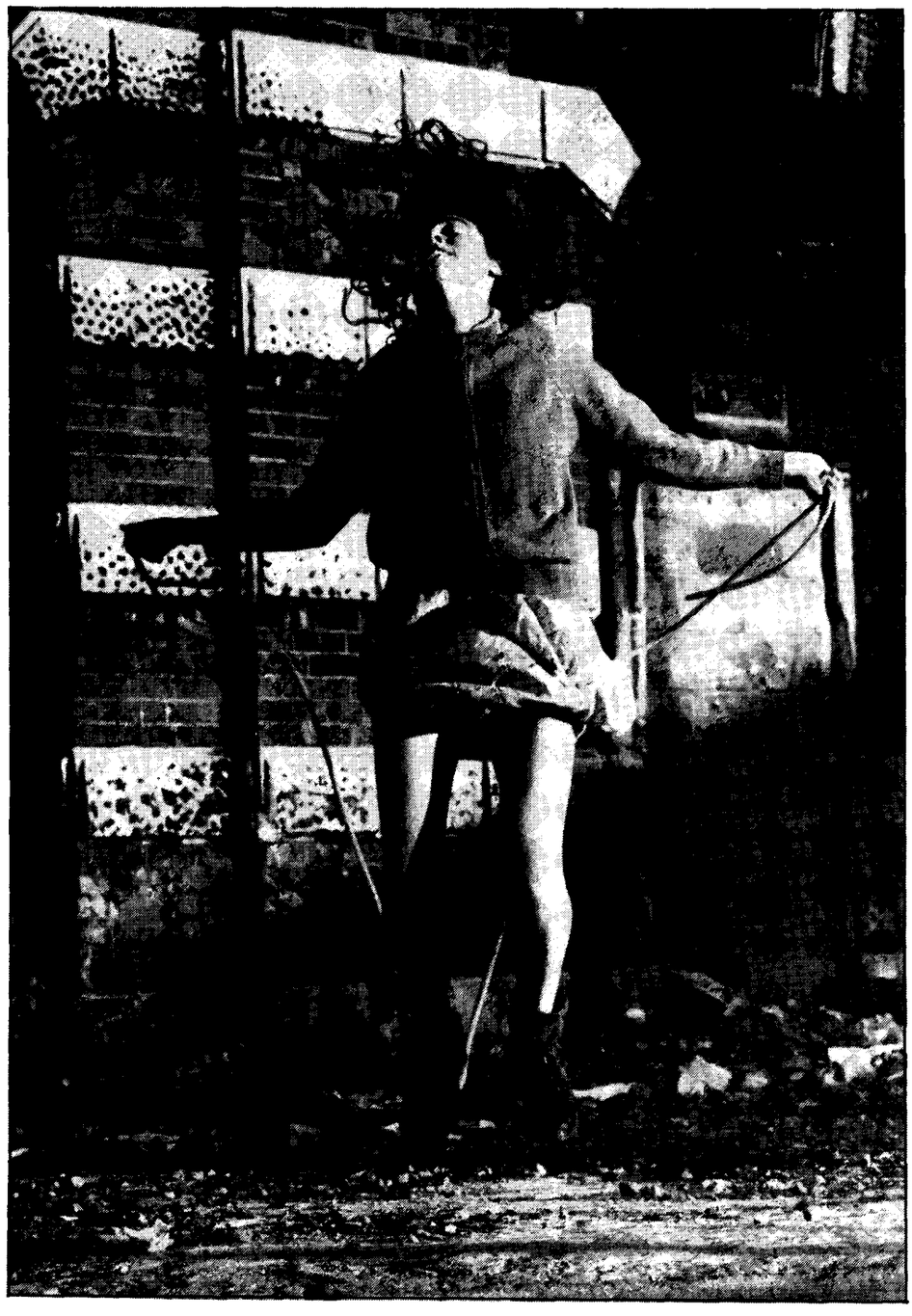
Much work designated under the vague title "performance art" is linked through a notion of the definite arbitrary. The technique is to focus intensely on commonplace routines: the strategy should be a revelation. If *Skipping* conforms to this model, it does so with an illuminating brilliance that makes the film maker Isaac Julien's **Looking For Langston** seem trite in comparison.

Julien has transformed his film about the American poet Langston Hughes into a performance piece. The short movie *Langston*, based on a highly impressionistic reading of poems written by the Harlem radical, was first shown last year on Channel 4's gay magazine programme, *Out On Tuesday*. Shot in monochrome, it organised itself beautifully around its subject matter of gay, black society, dealing sensitively with the social pressures to cloak such desire in silence.

In transforming the film into a performance piece, Julien's over-riding message is simple: that all life is a performance, at which we are are all interested voyeurs. The preview of *Langston* took place at night during 90mph gales in London's Kings Cross. It was presented as four *tableaux vivants* enacted between a graveyard, St Pancras' Coroners Court, backstreets and a canal tow path. Spectators were warned that they attended at their own risk. In the performance, the characters amble towards one another in poses reminiscent of the American novelist John Rechy's sex-hunter texts. An obtrusive deviation from the film is a slide show detailing the legal correspondence between Julien and Hughes' estate (which wants to stress the poet's sexual ambivalence).

Moving between fact and fiction results in an unbalancing act. However much Julien tries to present what he perceives as Hughes's hidden history, the real poet (as opposed to the imagined one) does not play ball. The overwhelming impression is of unsettling loss, not of Langston, but of meaning. Like *Skipping*, *Langston* is an eavesdropping experience, but he loses sight of a simple fact: the framework of play is not a substitute for historical truth or narrative coherence. And in Julien's uncertainty of where to look for Langston, the occasion passes into a performance of pieces, as transitory as the daisy petals that in the final scene are cast into the waters of the Great Northern Canal.

"A Girl Skipping" previews on March 24 at The Arnolfini, Bristol, then continues at The Place, London (April 3-14), before touring. "Looking For Langston" will be performed as part of the Edge 90 programme around the country, details from 091 232 0862.



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Lewisham Education is committed to securing a systematic improvement to achievement levels, particularly among those who are from black and ethnic minority communities.

Fundamental to Lewisham's commitment to race equality in education is its commitment to the monitoring of educational outcomes of black and ethnic pupils and students.

This crucial post will be responsible with the Department's Research and Statistics Section for the development of performance indicators in relation to race equality in Lewisham Education and the promotion of research and strategic policy development in relation to education and race equality issues within the Borough.

Lewisham is a multi-racial Borough and the person appointed will be expected to have a high level of commitment to working in a multi-racial environment and to have experience of research and policy development in race equality matters. **(Ref: EI/45)**.

Applications for all these posts will be particularly welcome from black and ethnic minority people as they are under-represented in this level of the organisation.

Application forms and job details from Education Personnel, 1 Aitken Road, Catford SE6 3BL. Tel: 01-695 6028 (24 hour ansaphone). Please quote appropriate reference. Closing date: 30th March 1990.

Lewisham Education

MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

National Institute for Medical Research

Occupational Welfare Officer

(Part-time 25 hrs/week)

(reference AP/0039)

Applications are invited for the part-time post of Welfare Officer at the Institute. The duties of the post include the provision of a comprehensive welfare, information and accommodation service for approximately 700 employees, students and visiting scientific workers.

Applicants should possess a minimum of 5 GCSE/GCE passes including two at "A" level (or equivalent). In addition previous experience of similar work would be an advantage but is not essential. Candidates should have a mature approach, demonstrated organisational skills, a sympathetic ear and, ideally, a good knowledge of the local area to assist with accommodation queries. It is a requirement of the post that the successful candidate should own and drive a motor vehicle.

The appointment will be made to the Council's Executive Officer grade at a salary on the incremental scale ranging from £5,801 p.a. to £9,517 p.a. pro rata (inclusive of London Weighting and Pension Supplement). Additional increments may be awarded on the basis of performance. Annual leave is 22 days plus public holidays and 2.5 privilege days.

The Institute is situated in pleasant rural surroundings and offers a staff restaurant and excellent sports, recreational and social facilities.

Please telephone for an application form and job description quoting the reference number, on 01-959 3666, extension 2270, or write to Ms. Frances Griffiths, Personnel Officer, National Institute for Medical Research, The Ridgeway, Mill Hill, London NW7 1AA.

The closing date for completed applications is 6th April.

The Medical Resarch Council is an Equal Opportunities Employer.

The Blue Cross is an animal welfare charity caring for ALL animals

BLUE CROSS

invites applications for the post of

BRANCH MANAGER

at its Animal Welfare Centre in Cambridge

The centre deals primarily with cats, other domestic animals and wildlife.

Some management experience is preferred.

The post is residential and applicants must have a current driving licence.

For further information, application form and job description, please contact: Fran Mcleod, The Blue Cross, Shilton Road, Burford, Oxon OX8 4PF. Tel: Burford (099382) 2651. Closing date: March 23, 1990.

PARENTS & CO

A support project for parents and under fives requires a

TRAINING DEVELOPMENT WORKER (P/T)

To develop an exciting new parent training scheme, and to recruit and support volunteers. *Training and group work experience essential.*

Salary £8,369 incl. L.W., 20 hours per week, 6 weeks' annual holiday.

We are an equal opportunities employer: Applicants are welcome from all cultural backgrounds.

Closing date: March 28, 1990. Informal meeting: April 5.

Formal interviews: April 9.

Information and application form from: Parents & Co., St. Margaret's, 25 Leighton Road, London NW5 2QD. Telephone 01-482 2593.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

For further information please ring 01 739 1645

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ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ST CHRISTOPHER'S SCHOOL (BRISTOL)

(A Rudolph Steiner School for Children with Special Needs)

URGENTLY REQUIRED FOR EASTER, 1990

HOSTEL PARENT

and

ASSISTANT HOSTEL PARENT

to take charge of a hostel for 20 children with severe learning difficulties. The boys and girls are aged between seven and 17.

There are nine Group Parents to care for the children and they need the support of Senior Staff who have an understanding of the Anforoposophical impulse of the School and the needs of such children.

Salary £9,300 and £6,975 respectively. There is a two-bedroom maisonette as accommodation, generous holidays and a contributory pension scheme.

Application Forms and Job Description are obtainable from: The Personnel Assistant, 1/2 Carisbrooke Lodge, Westbury Park, Bristol BS6 7JE. Telephone: (0272) 733301/736875.

TGWU

STAFF VACANCY

HEAD OF THE DESIGN AND PRINT PRODUCTION UNIT

Applications are invited for the post of Head of the Design and Print Production Unit based at the Transport & General Workers' Union Transport House, Smith Square, Westminster, London SW1P 3JB.

Applicants should have experience in Design and Print and have the ability to work on their own initiative to a very high standard, to supervise staff and to plan work.

The successful applicant will be responsible for assisting in setting up clear production targets, monitoring work flows and ensuring efficient stock control. Health and Safety is regarded by the Union as an important area and understanding of Health and Safety in Print and Design is required, as is the ability to ensure a safe and efficient working environment at all times.

The post holder reports directly to the Head of Central Services on all matters relating to production and supervision.

The salary for this position is £12,520 per annum with Luncheon Vouchers and twenty-six days annual holiday.

Please contact Terri Evans, Personnel Unit on 828 7788 for an application form to be returned no later than FRIDAY 23 MARCH 1990.

TGWU IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER.

THE DISABILITY ALLIANCE

DIRECTOR

Over 6 million people in Britain have disabilities; most rely on State benefits as their main source of income. The Disability Alliance - representing over 120 organisations - is concerned with the income needs of people with disabilities and campaigns for the introduction of an urgently needed comprehensive disability income. The Alliance's sister organisation - the Disability Alliance Educational and Research Association (DAERA) - is the leading independent resource for advice, information and training on benefits for people with disabilities, and publishes the Disability Rights Handbook.

You will take responsibility for co-ordinating the Disability Alliance's campaigning and policy work in the 1990s, along with co-ordinating the research, policy and other activities of DAERA. You will be responsible for ensuring a sound financial base - fund-raising is essential for both organisations. You need to be creative in initiating ideas and in responding to relevant issues of concern. Experience of social security and campaigning are essential, as is the ability to work to tight deadlines without secretarial backup. Experience of organising or managing a small staff group is essential, together with a commitment to maintain the established teamwork approach. You also need good written and oral communication skills, and will be required to represent the organisations externally. Understanding of disability benefits and personal experience of disability are desirable as is a knowledge of the workings of Parliament and government departments.

Salary: from Point 7 £15,936 to Point 10 £17,781 (incl. London Weighting) on AUT Researchers' scale (a fundamental review of all salaries is currently underway). 5 weeks' holiday.

Applications from people with disabilities positively welcomed.

Closing date: Wednesday 21 March 1990.

Job description and application form from:
The Disability Alliance ERA, 25 Denmark Street, London WC2H 8NJ or telephone 01-379 6142.

ASSISTANT WARDEN

required at Elizabeth Fry House Reading

This House Office approved hostel managed by the Elizabeth Fry Trust a Christian foundation accepts up to 20 residents on Probation, Bail and Prison Licence.

It gives priority to women and offers specialist facilities to pregnant women and mothers with babies.

Applicants should be over 23 years old, emotionally resilient and with a variety of life and work experience.

Although required to take considerable personal responsibility the successful candidate must work within a close knit team which includes ancillary workers and concentrates on developing residents life and social skills.

Appointment subject to NJC, Scheme of Conditions of Service and encouragement is given to in-service training, this post is equally suitable for an aspiring CQSW candidate after 2 years in post or a mature career residential worker.

Salary Grade III (points 18-23).

For informal discussion, job description and application form contact the Warden, 6 Coley Avenue, Reading, RG1 6LQ. Tel: 0734 572385.

Closing date for applications: March 31, 1990.

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Classified Advertising

Display advertisement copy to be set – Monday noon
Lineage – Friday (prior to publication on following week)
Camera ready artwork – Tuesday
Classified Display Rates:
Standard Rate: £18.00 per s.c.c.
Voluntary Organisations: £11.00 per s.c.c.
Linage Rates: 50p per word (minimum 20 words) Box No. £2.50
All advertisements subject to VAT at 15%
Correspondence should be addressed to
Classified Advertisement Department
New Statesman & Society,
Foundation House, Perseverance Works,
38 Kingsland Road, London, E2 8DQ
Advertising Staff
Chris Gallagher (Deputy Ad Manager - Classified)
Michael Breen (Sales Executive)
Siobhan O'Shea (Sales Executive)
Linda Ring (Advertising Secretary)
Dawn King (Production)
Telephone: 01-739-1645
Fax 01-739-9307
Telex 28449

WELFARE SUPPORT WORKER

Croydon Council for Community Relations are looking for suitable Asian/Afro-Caribbean Candidates (Sec 52D of Race Relations Act). One post job share (18 hours pro-rata) to help and assist the local community especially women, single parents and elderly women from Asian/Afro-Caribbean cultural backgrounds.

Understanding of welfare rights, housing, health issues as they affect women.

Knowledge of statutory and voluntary organisations is desirable.

No formal training or qualifications required, but applicants should have gained community work experience paid or unpaid and an ability to communicate well (written-verbal).

Salary: SO1 — £12,960-£13,824 (pro-rata) + £912 London Weighting.

For application form and further details contact: CCCR, 70 Park Lane, Croydon CR0 1JE. Tel: 01-686 8014.

Closing date for applications: Friday, 6th April, 1990.

UKIAS

wishes to appoint

2 IMMIGRATION COUNSELLORS

One to work in its Birmingham office and one in its Manchester office. The work involves counselling people with immigration problems, making representations to the Home Office and Immigration Service on their behalf, and presenting appeals before Immigration Adjudicators. Social work or legal background preferred, previous immigration experience desirable. Salary scale £11,300-£14,650.

Application form and further details from Director, United Kingdom Immigrants Advisory Service, County House, 190 Great Dover Street, London SE1 4YB (01-357 7511). Closing date for applications April 2, 1990. Please specify which location preferred.

Friends of the Earth

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (ADMINISTRATION)

Friends of the Earth recognise the key role that support functions play to ensure its overall effectiveness as an organisation. For this reason, we have created a new post of Assistant Director (Administration) with overall responsibility for the management and integration of FoE's support functions including Finance, Personnel, Office Management, and Computer Development. The successful applicant will also be responsible for the maintenance and development of effective administrative and resource management systems throughout the organisation.

Applicants should have considerable experience at a senior level of personnel management and, preferably, another of the above functions and be able to demonstrate the ability to manage and integrate FoE's key support functions. A commitment to environmentalism is also essential.

Salary c£22,000 p.a. Ref: AD1

For an application form and job description, please quote the reference number and send a large SAE to the Personnel Department, Friends of the Earth, 26-28 Underwood Street, London. N1 7JQ or telephone 01-251 0875 (answerphone).
Closing Date 6th April, 1990.

Friends of the Earth

FoE has no-smoking offices

FoE is striving to be an Equal Opportunity Employer

RE-ADVERTISEMENT

CUSS

DIRECTOR

Salary £16,260 - £17,754

CUSS is a long-established innovative organisation recognised as a pioneer in its work with people with learning difficulties. CUSS is seeking a Director to manage the organisation and its development in the 1990s.

The post will involve management of the long-standing Short Stay, residential and Teaching services and implementing an innovative programme of new work which will involve the development and testing of new models of service delivery.

We are seeking someone with experience in the statutory or voluntary sectors with a proven track record in staff management, negotiation of funding and initiation of new projects. Experience in the field of services to people with learning difficulties would be an advantage.

Application forms and further details available from:

CUSS,
32 Cowbridge Road East,
Canton, Cardiff CF1 9DU.

Telephone 0222 382151.

Closing date March 30, 1990.

CUSS

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PROJECT WORKERS

Salary: £11,922 pa

The SELF HELP ORGANISATION FOR EX-PRISONERS — A small housing association with houses in West and East London — wishes to appoint two project workers.

The project workers are responsible for all contact with residents, including running house meetings, upkeep of the properties, collection of rents, counselling and advice.

The workers appointed must have a sympathetic understanding of the needs of ex-offenders, communicate well, cope with stress, have organisational skills and a commitment to Equal Opportunities.

For further information and an application form please contact:

JAN KINGS, S.H.O.P. HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD, 60A Amhurst Road, Hackney, London E8 1JH. Tel 01-985 8939.

Closing date for applications: April 4 1990.

—THIS IS A READVERTISEMENT— Previous applicants need NOT reapply!

AS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER WE WELCOME APPLICATIONS FROM ALL SECTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY.

HOWEVER WE REGRET NO WHEELCHAIR ACCESS

ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY TECHNICAL AID CENTRES LIMITED
(ACTAC)

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

(Housing/Tenant Participation)

ACTAC is a voluntary national membership network of over 50 not-for-profit agencies which provide professional technical services for local community and tenants projects. Increasingly these agencies are becoming involved in estate improvement and other tenant led housing and environmental projects.
An Assistant Director is required to be responsible for this area of work and, in particular, to:

- gather information on good practice, funding and relevant legislation;
- develop appropriate guidelines and policies for ACTAC;
- provide information and advice to ACTAC members;
- advise on/provide relevant training for members.
- develop links with other agencies involved;
- produce reports and publications on this area of work.

The post is based in Liverpool and will involve travelling nationally and unsociable hours. Salary SO1/2 (£12,960-£15,081)
For further details and informal discussion contact: Colm Bradley, Director, ACTAC, Royal Institution, Colquitt Street, Liverpool L1 4DE (051 708 7607). Closing date: March 30, 1990.
ACTAC is striving to be an Equal Opportunities Employer

VAUXHALL ACTION FOR HOMELESS IN THE COMMUNITY
(A Project of Lambeth Methodist Mission)

Applications are invited for the following post:

PROJECT LEADER

(NJC Scale 6, £11,667-£12,462 + ILW £1,722)

We are seeking an experienced worker to play a key role in the running of this church-based day centre for homeless people in Vauxhall SE11.

Closing date for completed applications: March 28, 1990; interviews to be held on April 10.

VAHC is working towards equal opportunities.

For informal discussion and forms contact: Rev Michael Fielding, Lambeth Methodist Mission, 1-5 Lambeth Road, London SE1 7DQ. Tel (01)-735 2166.

◆ STANDBY STAFF ◆

SOCIAL WORKERS

- Excellent Rates
- Flexibility
- Holiday Pay
- Phone Julia Kwest

01-377 5789

Classified advertising
Tel: 01-739-1645

OV SELECTION

have a number of vacancies for temporary & permanent office staff with typing skills. We welcome enquiries from mature people as well as College leavers.

Phone Odette Veazey, OV Selection (Emp. Agy), Abford House, 15 Wilton Road, London SW1V 1LT. 01-828 8345.

Courses / Training

HERON
Conferences in Education and Medicine

A LEVEL STUDY DAY PLACES STILL AVAILABLE IN

SOCIOLOGY 10 April
PSYCHOLOGY 18 April
ECONOMICS 19 April
POLITICS 20 April

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

Purpose of day is to analyse and break down exam questions. This will be in small tutorial groups led by experienced tutors.

Bookings and further details:

Phone: 01 761 4592

£22.50 incl. VAT

All facilities and lunch.

AS A MATTER OF FAX: 01 739 9307

University of Sheffield

MA AND DIPLOMA IN PSYCHIATRY, PHILOSOPHY AND SOCIETY

This new one-year programme, commencing in September 1990, is designed to clarify the problems connected with mental health and the treatment of the mentally ill.

The course will enable **practitioners** or **would-be practitioners** to become more adept at thinking around the complex and difficult ideas involved in mental health. It will also appeal to **social scientists** and **philosophers** interested in the theoretical, cultural and sociopolitical facets of contemporary society.

For further information please contact Dr Tim Kendall, University Department of Psychiatry, Floor O, Royal Hallamshire Hospital, Sheffield S10 2JF.

Tel (0742) 766222 ext 2911/2644.

at the leading edge

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London Borough of Merton

Wimbledon School of Art

MA in Theatre Design

This CNAA validated two-year part-time course is designed for applicants who have completed a graduate level course in theatre design and have at least one year's professional experience.

The course aims to be ...

A laboratory...in which designers can test their current practices and concepts, and shape new ones.

A forum...where designers, directors and teachers debate, dispute and develop the language of theatre design.

An archive...where the written and spoken ideas of designers can be gathered, recorded, shared and stored.

Information from the Registrar,
Wimbledon School of Art,
Merton Hall Road, London SW19 3QA.
Tel: 01-540 0231

Conferences

TOWARDS 2000
A DERBYSHIRE PEACE FEDERATION CONFERENCE

SATURDAY 19th MAY 1990

CHESTERFIELD COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY AND ART

Speakers include: Meg Beresford (National CND), Chris Darke (National MSF Union), Freda Chapman (Green Party), Dr Paul Rogers (Bradford School of Peace Studies)

Workshops on: ENVIRONMENT, PEACE, THIRD WORLD and related issues.

Question Time Panel, children's entertainment, exhibitions, stalls, creche

A CHANCE TO VOICE YOUR OWN OPINION ON ISSUES THAT AFFECT US ALL

Further information:
Ruth Calderwood, 11 Woodland Way, Old Tupton, Chesterfield S42 6HZ

DERBYSHIRE County Council
Supports Nuclear Free Zones

Agenda
Wed 21 Mar

PETER MANDELSON on Campaigning. 7.30 pm, Cole Room, 11 Dartmouth Street, SW1. Central London Fabian Society. All welcome.

Therapy

PSYCHOTHERAPY GROUP – *ongoing.* N.W. London. Tuesday evening. Contact Christine Embleton on 062882 8139 or Werner Prall 01-451 3607.

Publications

DUTCH INTERIORS, new poems by Sarah Lawson, only £1.95, from Mid Northumberland Arts Group, Town Hall, Ashington, Northumberland NE63 8RX.

Study Holidays

FRENCH LANGUAGE SUMMER SCHOOL - Loire Valley. July and August. All levels. Please contact E.T.S., Manor Oast, Adisham, Canterbury CT3 3JF. Telephone: 0304 840721.

Booksellers

SECONDHAND BOOKS FOUND. No search fees. Send your 'Books Wanted' list to: Book-Tracers (NS), 1 Temple Gardens, Glasgow G13 1JJ.

Holiday/Travel

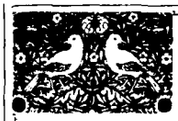
SOUTHERN SPAIN *self-contained apartment in* old olive mill. 12 miles from coast. Beautiful and unspoilt. Tel: *(0923) 857760.*

RETIRED MAN seeks persons/companions for sailing 34ft westerly south coast April/May possibly French canals-Med June share costs. Box (09) 103.

CORNWALL, cosy fishermans cottage in Mevagissey. Quiet, traffic free location. One minute harbourside and amenities. Telephone 0726 844004.

EASTER ART PROGRAM SPAIN 8 - 22 April. Comprehensive 'live-in' art program for *beginners + advanced in beautifully situated* olive mill. Tel UK: 0923 857760.

Personal



OLD FRIENDS

DOES LIFE BEGIN AT 40?

MARRIAGE, FRIENDSHIP or COMPANIONSHIP:
the introduction agency for the 40s, 50s, & 60s

Details from: Anne Brent,
18a Highbury New Park, N5 2DB
Telephone: 01-226 5432

DOCUMENTARY RESEARCHER wishes to interview men and women who choose to live or work in a single-sex environment. Telephone 01-749-3243.

Heartsearch

SERENDIPITY or search, I'll find you! Desirable, academic woman (42, open marriage) dreams of warm, brilliant, well-built lover, Oxford. Please write to Box (09) 101.

CRAZILY SERIOUS: Bradford based lecturer photographer (40s) planning trip John O'Groats seeks companion. Cost minimal. No strings. Are you lively, easygoing, female and free for ten days over Easter? Box (09) 102.

SOUGHT: by maybe compatible woman, 51: humans-loving, self-loving, literary/ philosophical, academic/intellectual man; similar age or younger; serious, happy and intelligent: for loving. Please reply to Box (09) 106.

SINGLE WOMAN, 37, (son 5) South West. Doesn't believe there are any kind and funny men (30 - 45) to share walks, cinema, politics, books. Prove me wrong? Reply to Box (07) 076.

WIDOWER professional, n/s, retired, leftist, still learning, seeks slimish woman for warmth, travel, growth and more. London/Kent area. Please write to Box (09) 108.

LONDON WOMAN, YOUNG ACTIVE 49, in helping profession. Enjoys visual arts, creating interiors, learning languages, travel in Africa and Europe, yoga, riding, but tired of independent lifestyle. Would like to meet reflective, sociable man to share love of arts, landscape, beauty and exchanging idaes. Preferably spiritually and politically alive. Box (10) 109.

LOVELY DEVON; LONELY SUNDAYS. Attractive slim academic female (good cook) seeks male 40 - 50's for 'Friend business'. 'Green', enlightened, humour; interest arts, music. Near Exeter. Please reply to Box (10) 110.

LONDON WOMAN, 50's, ACTIVE, youthful, wide interests, very presentable & decently voluptuous, seeks gentlemen for happy, sincere caring & hopefully permanent relationship. Please write to Box (10) 111.

WHERE HAVE ALL the single (Asian) men gone? Two professional Asian women wish to know. Must like children. Replies to Box (10) 112.

IS THERE LIFE AFTER 50? This woman certainly thinks so, but would enjoy it more with a like-minded man to share her interest in books, films, theatre, country walks, vegetarian cooking etc. Scotland/Northern England. Please write to Box (10) 113.

ASIAN MARRIAGE & FRIENDSHIP Bureau International welcomes non-Asians. All areas/ ages. DNSS, 181 Melton Road, Leicester. Tel/ Fax 0533-610266.

GENTLE, ATTRACTIVE, sensual Brighton man (56) seeks sensual, attractive woman for secret sessions of massage, fantasy and fun. Please reply to Box (10) 114.

TALL SENSITIVE LIBRAN LAD, 41, lover of life, active Green, wide interests seeks sensual Skoda driver Worcester way. Box (10) 115.

GENTLE RECONSTRUCTED MAN, humourous, intelligent, aware, warm-hearted, courageous, trustworthy, unattached, sought by similar woman, 50 years young, who believes you exist somewhere, for joint ventures/mutual enjoyment. London area initially. Box (10) 116.

SMOKEY CLARET AND GUINNESS (low haemoglobin) *drinker. Reluctant teacher, aspiring* writer, ex evangelist reborn Haight/Ashbury seeks fulsome independent woman for mutual entertainment, caring 50 years. East London. Write to Box (10) 117.

THE MIXED SALAD. A Club where unattached, cultured, and intelligent individuals can mix, share affinities, talk, relax and eat well. Membership will depend on personal interview and members will be placed on a club register. There is no age limit. Invitations will be compiled from this register and these will be extended to an equally mixed group of single men and women, people of compatible interests and tastes. Members are asked to a private Shropshire country house set in large and tranquil gardens. Harmonious and sympathetic surroundings. Exceptional scenery. Good conversation. Log fires. Telephone: 0584 73207.

NEO-RENAISSANCE WOMAN (40's) seeks understanding enlightened man (40's – 50's) for enjoying Art, music, opera, travel, (sailing?) together. Write to Box (07) 078.

RED, GREEN AND BLUE, depending on mood. Female (24) seeks more colourful life in Herts and Beds. Replies to Box (09) 094.

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VOLUNTEER NOTICE BOARD is a free service provided by New Statesman & Society with financial assistance from Thames Television's Help programme. Interested organisations are invited to send their copy (approximately 45 words) to Dawn King at New Statesman & Society, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London, E2 8DQ by Friday preceding publication date. Please note this service is for recruiting volunteers only. If you have salaried vacancies contact the Classified Department on 01-739-1645.

BURY ST. EDMUNDS Cyrenians seek a volunteer to work, live and share their lives with homeless people in all aspects of an exciting new project providing, at the moment, accom. in a hostel for 10 residents and a pilot scheme for a Drop-in Day Centre. Valuable experience will be gained. Free board and lodging and generous weekly allowance. Age 18+: min. period 6 months. Please contact: Joan Hobson, 7 Cannonfields, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk, IP33 1JX. Tel: (0284) 705532.

WOMEN'S ENVIRONMENTAL Network urgently requires volunteers for our busy Islington office. Expenses paid. Please ring Charo or Bernadette on 01 490 2511.

THE FAMILY COURTS Service are looking for volunteers to help run two Saturday Access Centres in South London where divorced or separated families can spend time with their children. Please give us a ring on: 01-672 2682.

MENCAP. A new and exciting research project needs YOUR help! Will you share your Leisure interest with someone who finds learning difficult? Accompany them to the activity and give help as needed. Training available and full support given all the time. Two boroughs have been chosen to pilot this scheme. Kensington and Chelsea and Richmond upon Thames, so you will need to live in or near them. Tel Helen Richards on 01 250 4105.

HARROW HELPING HANDS. Volunteer Recruitment Day at Kodak Hall, Wealdstone, on Sat. 24 March between 10 am – 1 pm. Volunteers are needed to work within Harrow with people with learning difficulties. 16 Organisations and Projects come together to give you information. Harrow Volunteer Bureau 01 863 5426.

MACEDON TRUST: An open door to homeless people needs volunteers to man it's office, help with house maintenance & spend time with residents. No qualifications necessary but patience + drivers licence are assets. Accom. + pocket money provided. North London area. We are recruiting throughout the year. Contact Malcolm Jackson at Macedon Trust, P.O. Box 126, London N17 OLB.

CHARTER 88 VIGILS. Make a date with democracy. Are you interested in helping to organise the Charter 88 monthly vigils? All skills and enthusiasm welcome. Ring Josephine King or Paul Farthing on 833 5813 (answering machine after office hours).

CSV – VOLUNTEERING in W. Germany. Social service placements available to EEC nationals aged 18 - 25 with good conversational Geraman. 6 month placements starting in Sept. SAE to Ellen Koretz Whitton, CSV, 237 Pentonville Rd, London N1 9NJ.

THAMES HELP

Thames Help, presented by Jackie Spreckley, is a four minute local social action programme. It appears three times a week on Thames Television at 6.50pm approximately (check TV Times for details). Here is a summary of this week's programmes.

This week Thames Help is off the air.

Help Yourself To London 1989...

Our most popular and updated guide for retired people, listing leisure activities in and around London with special reference to those that are free or where concessions are available to pensioners.

Volunteer Book 1989...

Our new guide to voluntary work in the Thames area. Tells you where to start, how to find out which organisations need your help and which sort of voluntary work would suit you best.

How To Make The Most Of Your Grant Application...

This booklet is to encourage you to apply for money from a grant giving trust, offering helpful advice and how to raise funds for your local community group.

Poll Tax Advice...

Our latest publication, which answers questions about the Poll Tax and advises you on any rebates you might be entitled to.

All publications are free and available from:

HELP! (NS Booklets),
Thames Television PLC,
149 Tottenham Court Road, London, W1P 9LL

THAMES TELEVISION

Thames Help, Thames Television PLC, 149 Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 9LL. Telephone: 01-387 9494.

VOLUNTEERS: sought by the West London Day Centre for homeless and rootless people - if you are considering voluntary work and would like to know more, why not attend a free training day? Please telephone Andrew Thomas on 01 402 5468. Drive, flexibility + commitment required.

CHESTER AID to the Homeless are looking for Volunteer Residential workers. Full board, lodgings and pocket money paid. Also paid holidays and travel expenses. Further information please ring Anita Presford on 0244 318360 or write to: Roodee House, 22 Grosvenor St. Chester CH1 2DD.

KINGSTON Community Transport needs minibus drivers. Hrs to suit, regular or occasional work. If you want to get out, meet people, help your local community + gain minibus driver training experience (expenses paid), call us now on 547 3513.

GRIMSBY and CLEETHORPES District Victims Support. Victims of crime need support, help and advice. Volunteers are needed. Write or phone Sylvia Moss, Co-ordinator, 14 Town Hall St, Grimsby, South Humberside DN31 1HN. (0472) 250251.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED. If you are fit, with a sense of humour, can drive, have 4-6 months to spare and would like the experience of caring for a disabled person full-time in his own flat and can start March/April, then I have a vacancy for you. Volunteers receive £37 per week + £12 entertainment grant monthly + free accommodation. For more details contact: Alan Soffert Tel. 01-736 8555. West London Area.

BUILD A Relationship & Watch It Grow. Some children have no-one else who really listens to them. Some have little contact with a positive male figure. Join our volunteer group, men & women, and get to know one of these children. If you are interested, live within reach of Islington, and have 2-3 hours a week to spare, contact Span on 01 250 1223.

INTERESTED in Befriending a 38 year old disabled woman in N.W.10 area. Tel. 01 459 7178.

CHELMSFORD RAPE CRISIS Line – Volunteers Preparation Course, 73, Springfield Road, Chelmsford, Essex. Saturday 17 March, 2.00 pm. Tuesdays 20, 27 March, 3, 10 April, 7.30 pm. All women welcome. Previous counselling experience not necessary, but an understanding of the need for women to control their own recovery.

THE NAMIBIA SUPPORT Committee is seeking volunteers to help in its busy N. London office. All levels of offered commitment appreciated, reasonable travel expenses paid. Contact: Namibia Support Committee. PO Box 16, London NW5 2LW. Tel: 01 267 1941.

CHILDREN'S Country Holidays Fund. Volunteers are required urgently in the following London boroughs to act as the funds representative. Dealing with all matters concerning referrals of children from local agencies. Well organised people with an aptitude for paperwork and willing to visit the childrens family home. Plenty of spare time needed especially between March + August. Ealing Westminster, Tower Hamlets, Southwark, Kensington and Lewisham. Contact Reg. Office: 1 York St, Baker Street, London W1H 1PZ. Tel: 01-935 8371.

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David Bell is co-author of *The French Socialist Party*. **Joseph Bristow** teaches English at Sheffield City Polytechnic. **Cairns Craig** is a lecturer in English Literature at the University of Edinburgh. **Elaine Feinstein** is a poet and novelist. Her next book of poems will appear from Hutchinson in September. **John Lucas**'s latest book is called *England and Englishness*. **Sara Maitland**'s forthcoming novel *Three Times Table* is published by Chatto & Windus in April. **Robert Page** lectures in social policy at the School of Social Studies, University of Nottingham. **Mark Pearson** is the research officer at the Institute of Fiscal studies. **Rebecca O'Rourke** is a writer living in London. **Robert Service** is presently completing the second volume of his trilogy on Lenin. **Stephen Smith** is programme director of the public finance sector in the Institute of Fiscal Studies. **Marina Warner**'s essay *Careful cruelty, patient hate?* will be published next year. **Francis Wheen** is author of a forthcoming biography of Tom Driberg. **Toks Williams** is a freelance journalist.

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ENDGAMES

WEEKEND COMPETITION

No 3116 Set by Martin Fagg
It seems almost obligatory these days for those convicted or defeated in court to claim "a moral victory". Similar claims, for such a moral victory, from a notorious loser.

Report by Grace Elegy
I'm sorry to say de Meaner has taken herself off in a bit of huff. All that rumpus from young Tom (hinting at her incarceration in some kind of asylum!) have taken their toll. She's not as young as she used to be and it all became too much. She's asked me to inform all her loyal supporters that she's taking a rest from judging the comp for a while and putting her feet up. And no visitors, please.

Now for the comp. A good solid entry and the winners were, in my opinion, quite inspired: Rudolf Hess, Guy Fawkes, Derek Jameson, Al Capone, Mark Chapman and Charles Prior (the last two, respectively, killed John Lennon and is the Tory candidate in the Mid-Staffordshire by-election). I'm afaid the rest were nowhere near as good. The winners get £15 each except William Greenwell who may stand in a corner wearing the pointed hat with the large "D" on the front. Now I've had to speak to you about this before, Bill. Remember how I told you to read the question first? "... up to 150 words" it said. Now count yours. *Two hundred and eight-nine*. You can have only £10. Naomi Marks's entry steered pretty close to the wind as well. But the Concise Oxford defines "court" as: "a place or hall in which justice is administered", and who am I to quibble? In Naomi's fantasy world, that's clearly what she's hop-

Rudolph Hess
I take this decision as a complete vindication of everything I've tried to achieve. The judges have showed their faith in my essential innocence in the clearest possible way.

Yes, I know life imprisonment sounds like some sort of reprimand, but not when you compare it with the other 11 verdicts. Look at it this way, I got life and they got death. You can't ask for a starker contrast than that. In that context, it's what you'd call a nominal sentence. Just a dressed-up Not Guilty, really.

I'll serve some time, of course, for the look of the thing—but I believe they're laying on a special place for me—but with good behaviour and the five years I've already done, it clearly won't be too long. I expect to be out for Christmas.

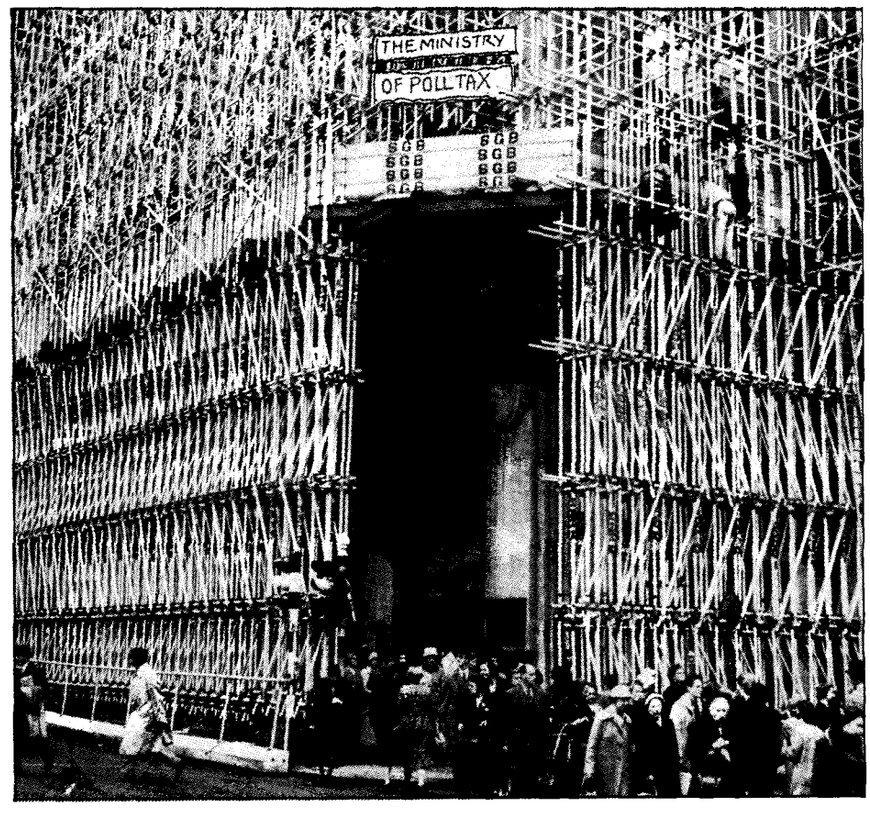
Noel Petty

Charles Prior (after the count)
I don't regard the result as a shattering defeat for the Conservative Party. On the contrary, it's Labour that has suffered success, and we who are flushed with failure.

They might have overturned our 14½ thousand majority and won by a so-called landslide, but remember how they boasted during the campaign that we'd be lucky to get 100 votes. Well, look what happened. We got 129—and that's *in real terms*.

I say it's better to lose a seat and be right than gain one and be wrong. We've never been afraid to take unpopular decisions. Now, after Mid-

GRAFFITI BY PAIGE



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Staffordshire, we've proved we're the unpopular party. And that's the moral victory we'll be celebrating tonight.

Naomi Marks

Mark Chapman
First, all his best work was behind him. He was never likely to release another even half-decent album. Second, it will put a stop to all that speculation about whether the Beatles will ever re-form. Third, this prison sentence will enable me to listen to all his old records undisturbed. It really couldn't be better. And fourth, at least I've still got his autograph.

Simon Herbertson

Guy Fawkes
I would just like to say that I regard my sentence as a triumph for those stout hearts who oppose not only the creeping republicanism of this country, but the depths to which an already low church has sunk, and the self-evident failure of monarchical nerve. This corrupt government is about to demonstrate its impiety by the damp, legal squib of hanging, drawing and quartering me, doubtless after inflicting other indecencies. This illustrates the moral bankruptcy of the state, since it has arraigned me, not for an act of violence, but merely for "conspiracy", for a publicity stunt that was so obviously intended for discovery that our group positioned itself in the parliamentary cellars on the night before the State Opening. Our intelligence in allowing ourselves to be arrested—unless our prosecutors *really* believe we expected to throw a match amongst the kegs and still have time to leg it—is now highlighted by the unimaginative sentences passed.

We are not men of straw. We have lit a symbolic bonfire under King James and his derogate commoners which will blaze through the centuries. In years to come, children will remember our campaign. They will push effigies of the king through the streets in carts, calling "A penny for the guy". They will mock the politicians with cries of "Here's some dud sparklers again!" and toast our cause. When they think of our sacrifices, they will gather to marvel again at our marketing strategies with cries of "Oooh!" and "Aaah!" We have not lost this case; we have won it! Everyone knows that Parliament has blown it up out of all proportion! And we hereby bequeath our advertising portfolio to Messrs Brock and Standard that our victory be celebrated forever!

Bill Greenwell

Al Capone
I've been in more courtrooms than you journalists together has had stories printed. I bet most of your stories has been *about* my court appearances.

"But today was my proudest day in any courtroom. Eleven years for non-payment of taxes is a *vindication* of all I've ever thought 'bout the IRS. I'm a good citizen and none of the accusations—gun licence violations, murders, bootleggin'—worried me as much as the tax rackets. I wanna pay my taxes. I *tried* to pay my taxes, but my money jus' wasn't good enough.

"With today's conviction I have the opportunity to expose the corruption and racial prejudice operatin' within the IRS. Today I won the first battle in my moral crusade to clean up American life.

"Thanks for comin', bruddas. See my press agent, Mia Bugia, for the date of the next conference."

Iain Halliday

Morning, morning! Jameson here! Cor blimey, the old Corporation ended up with egg on its face, didn't it? A case of what they call the biter bit, I reckon.

(music)

There we are, that was Manuel and his Music of the Mountains. Now, back to my libel suit against Auntie Beeb. "Sid Yobbo" they called me on Radio Four. They're intellectuals there, you know, so they think they can call people what they like. Sid Yobbo indeed! Cor blimey, I ask you...

(music)

The Mike Sammes Singers there. 'Course officially I didn't win. No whacking damages for Jameson, alas. But I got the last laugh, didn't I? He who laughs last, laughs longest. 'Cause here I am on Radio Two. I wonder where those satiricial blokes are now, eh? I wonder if they've still got jobs. Sid Yobbo indeed! Cor blimey.

Peter Norman

No 3119 Set by George Cowley and P S Burton
Never let it be said that the comp complex doesn't keep up with the rest of the magazine. Could we have a printable conversation between a prostitute and his or her client, where the client is a public figure, who's identity is hinted at but not explicitly stated. Any comper sending in Jeffrey Archer will be eliminated for having a threadbare imagination. No more than 150 words and to be in by 29 March.

WEEKEND CROSSWORD

Crossword 1629

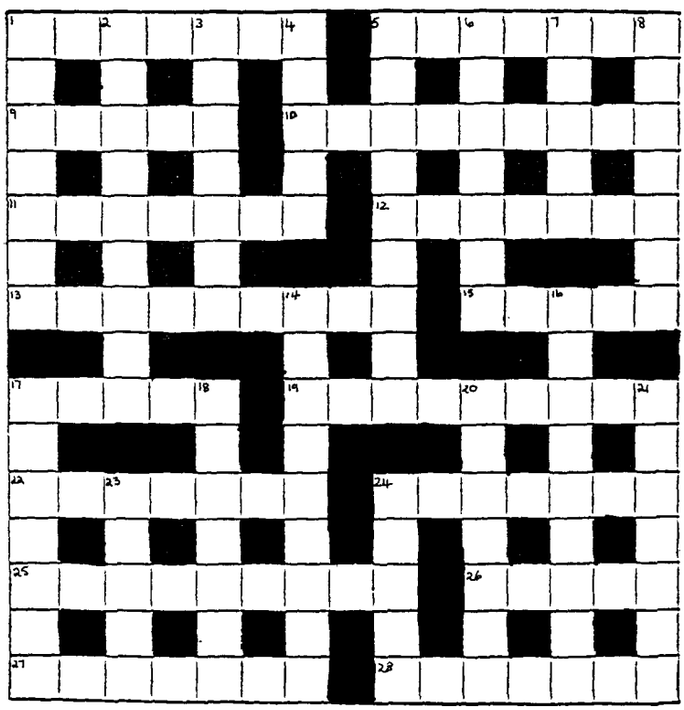
PRIZES: £5 book tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1629, New Statesman & Society, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ by first post Monday 26th March

ACROSS
1. Where to get refreshment when there is a tiny jumper in the side (7)
5. It is cruel to keep everyone in compay with us (7)
9. Iago's trash (5)
10. Famous Russian composer appearing in the revised Grove (9)
11. Make the creature possess a fresh place to live. (3,4)
12. To be cut to pieces in a duel is not perfect (7)
13. Gem from Apollo? (9)
15. It is sticky for a fellow without evidence of bravery (5)
17. Copper animal prepared for the pot (3,2)
19. Distributing thin doses is breaking the law (9)
22. Cutting off, such as when a poet is without company (7)
24. They have hooligan supporters but it would be different if drinks were banned (7)
25. Criticise a weapon although it is saving society (5,4)
26. Not quite a desire to get on together (5)
27. Bird has to pretend to fight and quarrel (7)
28. Slander is universal in a peaceful city (7)

DOWN
1. Man without something to ride in London, for example (7)
2. Missile base provides useful plant (9)
3. Upsetting the coolest cats (7)
4. She for example is embraced by a male (5)
5. Motorists keep nothing inside them, being drunkards (9)
6. Charging makes a noise in the wood (7)
7. Colouring matter used for decoration in mineral (5)
8. Speak about love being exchanged for something to eat (7)
14. Not even a college man is a member of a secret order (9)
16. Loose morals met as a cause of destruction (9)
17. Forms with a large number of girls in (7)
18. Trend-setting individual in seaside place (7)
20. Garment for sovereign? (7)
21. Play is not youthful in a test (7)
23. Place inside the room a half-eaten sausage roll (5)
24. Involving third power (5)

Solution to 1627

Prizewinners to 1627
Ms B C Liesching, Belgium; Rose M Dacre, York; Mr D Dixon, Weymouth



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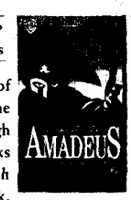

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